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WESTERN AMERICANA

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SHORT RAVELINGS FROM A LONG YARN, OR CAMP MARCH SKETCHES OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL. *From the Notes of Richard L. Wilson, by Benjamin F. Taylor. A Foreword for this edition has been written by Mr. Henry R. Wagner. — Reprinted through permission of the Chicago Historical Society.*

FINE ARTS PRESS
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA: 1936

FOREWORD

In 1927, Douglas C. McMurtrie in his *Early Printers in Chicago*, called attention to a pamphlet containing an account of a journey to Santa Fe, and printed in 1847. Not only is this important for its early Chicago imprint, but it is still more so as an early record of the vicissitudes of a Santa Fe caravan of the forties. For in the forties, sometime between the Texan expedition to New Mexico and the outbreak of the Mexican War, the caravan which Mr. Wilson accompanied made its way across the plains. According to a manuscript notation on the title the pamphlet was written by one Benjamin F. Taylor from the notes of Richard L. Wilson, and according to some manuscript notes, part on the back of the cover title and others on the reverse of the title. Mr. Taylor was for many years literary editor of the Chicago *Evening Journal*. Mr. Taylor presented it to a lady, Lucy M. Gaylord, and in time she gave it to Henry M. Hugunin, who later evidently presented it to the Chicago Historical Society, where it now reposes, the only copy so far discovered.

Mr. McMurtrie's record of it passed almost unnoticed; some even questioned the existence of such an imprint, and no one interested in western books, so far as I know, took the trouble to take a look at it. When, however, Mr. Charles L. Camp undertook to edit a new and revised edition of my *Plains*

and Rockies, an examination of *Short Ravelings* became necessary. The Society was willing to have photostats made and to allow it to be reprinted. From these photostats the present reprint has been made.

A man named Houck was elected to captain the caravan at Council Grove, and Miss Stella M. Drumm of the Missouri Historical Society has kindly looked up the narrative and has advised me that this caravan crossed the plains in the summer of 1842. It might be possible to identify some of the parties met on the plains or who overtook them, but this edition is not put forward as an historical document of first grade but as a charming, well-written tale of life with a Santa Fe caravan. The traveler, or more likely the "literary editor" had a strong poetic vein which he worked most vigorously, how successfully I leave it to the reader to judge. The Leather Stocking Tales of Cooper still supplied in 1847 the popular imagination with a picture of the American Indian, but the Iroquois and the Delaware were now to give way to the Pawnee, the Sioux, the Comanches, and the numerous tribes of plains Indians, through whose hunting grounds the caravans made their way. The fur trappers had already received some attention in works of fiction as well as of fact but it was not until after 1860 that the subject became a popular one. The Santa Fe trail followers had business on hand and in view,

and that end formed the basis for what Dr. Josiah Gregg and others wrote about it in later years.

The author in his ignorance of the Spanish language wrote the names of several places according to the phonetic system. In order to avoid misunderstandings or the use of footnotes these have been corrected.

HENRY R. WAGNER

History.

The "Chicago Evening Journal" was founded, edited and published by Richard Lush Wilson, brother of John L. Wilson, (Sheriff of Cook County and Postmaster of Chicago) and Charles L. Wilson, Secretary of Legation with Charles F. Adams, Minister to Great Britain under Lincoln's Administration. The first number of the "Evening Journal" was issued April twenty-second, 1844. Benj. F. Taylor was associate and literary editor of the "Evening Journal" for many years. He gave this pamphlet to Mrs. Lucy M. Gaylord, one of the early school-teachers in Chicago (with his autographs attached), and Mrs. Gaylord gave it to me in 1887.

Henry M. Huguenin.

Chicago, June, 1901.

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OR,

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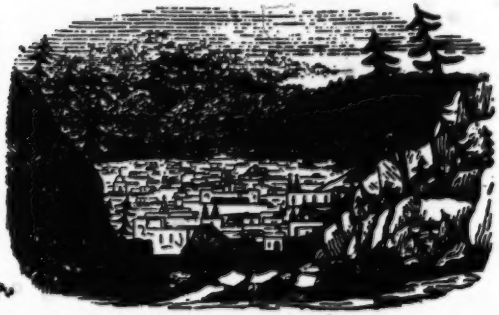

From the Notes of RICHARD L. WILSON.

CHICAGO, ILL.
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY GEER & WILSON,
DAILY JOURNAL OFFICE.
1847.

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PREFATORY NOTE

These unpretending notes of travel, even if worthy of a preface, would hardly obtain their due at our hands, for we abominate a preface as a sort of premeditated aggravation.

It may not, however, be improper to state that the following pages of real fact and truthful incident, strewn along the Santa Fe trail, owe their existence in part to the deepening interest with which the many now regard those wild regions, so soon to be redeemed from solitude and the desert, but more, to the friendly importunity of the few. And if wearied by that importunity we have committeed the sin of authorship, the reader will not blame us for the method of retaliation we have chosen.

But a preface is to the reader, what the desert was to the Israelites, and we cannot help thinking how unhappy the Pilgrim's lot, when after a dreary sojourn in the prefactory wilderness, no promised land appears to bless his eyes and as we think, we lay down our pen and—stop.

SHORT RAVELINGS

In setting out upon a journey, which separates one for so many months from home and friends, like that upon which we are about to embark, there are a thousand memories which crowd upon the mind —a thousand recollections that press with painful weight upon the brain and the heart. Notwithstanding all the excitement of the few days immediately preceding our departure—the bustle, hurry and note of preparation, oftentimes the mind would be found playing truant, and wandering far away to the scenes of other days. But now when the excitement is over, when it is both pleasure and instruction to call to mind scenes in which we took a part—the companions of our wanderings—the excitement of the chase, and the many associations as grateful as they were new and strange to us—having passed safely through the perils which were thought sometimes to have beset our little band, yet seeming, from the lapse of time that has intervened, to have been only perils of the imagination, we indulge in the pleasing retrospect, without a shade to intervene. We send forth these little sketches laden with all their imperfections, prepared as they were in the midst of pressing cares and imperative duties. That our readers may experience half the pleasure in their perusal, that we have felt in recalling them, is all that we desire, and more even than we dare hope.

CHAPTER FIRST.

The Starting—The Company—Misgivings.

FANCY yourself, my dear reader, transported at the word of a wizard, *"presto-change!" over prairie* and mountain and stream, to the little town of Independence, an hour's ride from that respectable, maiden river, the Missouri. Let it be the month that the poet says cannot last forever—a bright May morning. Far away it is, to be sure, for this is "a great country" we live in, but it is a proud reflection that the star-lit banner of Columbia is fluttered out by every breeze on the banks of that far-rolling river. Space may stretch away till it blends with the blue, between the patriotic heart and the home for which it beats—no familiar foot-fall may make music to his ear, and yet he feels that he is not altogether an alien and a stranger, and the rustling of its ample folds, is articulate, and dear as "household words"—but a truce to homilies.

Here away then, we are, at Independence, six hundred miles from St. Louis, surrounded by rolling prairies that rise in the distance to forests of primeval growth, rocking with their green, leafy billows, farther and farther, till they seem to make a shore of the bending heavens.

This is the great rendezvous of the Santa Fe and Mountain Traders, a wild and daring troop, yet cast in Nature's noblest moulds of manly beauty, with eyes full of intelligence and hearts full of feeling—all is life and bustle—packing and purchasing—lengthening girths and loading wagons—parting words and stirrup-cups—jabbering in Dutch, higgling in Spanish, swearing in bad French, anathematizing some refractory mule, in good, long-drawn Yankee—shouts and execrations—laughing and singing in tones unknown till Babel cleft the tongue of humanity so marvelously—stalwart forms flitting hither and thither, attired in buckskin hunting shirts, and moccasins wrought with quills from "the fretful porcupine"—little, sallow Frenchmen skipping around beneath felt hats of more than Hicksite amplitude—portly Germans phlegmatic as their own native marshes, waddling like Dutch galiots in a heavy sea—here a bronze-browed hunter, with his gaily painted hat, set jauntily upon his head, so as to display the frank but devil-may-care face beneath it, impatient of delay, has flung himself upon the lazy mule that is to be the companion of his wanderings, with one foot dangling in the great, wooden stirrup ever pendent from a Spanish saddle, and listlessly fingering his good rifle, he watches operations around him—there a dapper, little fellow all the way from *"Paree,"* a bowie knife and a bullet pouch swung at either side,

and a blanket strapped snugly to his back, is vainly attempting with no slight bestowal of *mon dieus* and *sacres,* to mount a vicious, curtailed specimen of stubbornness, that lets fly a pair of heels light as a prairie-dog's, at every effort of his little master to board him—everywhere hurry, everywhere excitement—Such are the sights and sounds that bewilder the eye and ear on the departure of a Santa Fe expedition from a western rendezvous. It was a scene worth going far to see—an epitome of humanity—a miniature world daguerreotyped in a moment, upon the eye and the heart. Bacon and tobacco, blankets and buffalo robes are already packed and stowed in trunks and bags, boxes and valises—the last kettle is swung astern the wagons, like a ship's boat—the mules are attached to the thirty-three vehicles, large, and small, of various and quaint construction. Crack! goes the shrill rifle of some hunter; click goes the lock of another, as it blazes away—a shout, a snatch of a song, a rattling of wheels, and the first of the lengthened train are under way. Tramp—tramp—after them hurry a troop of hunters upon their mules; "halloo!" shouts a pedestrian in a voice with a touch of a "nor-wester," as gathering up rifle, a bag of flour, two blankets and a chicken, he gives chase to the balance of his mess who are already on the way. One after another, the laden wagons roll from the crowded square; shouts, cheers and yells—away they wind

like an oriental caravan, and the little hamlet, just now so full of life and animation, is deserted and lone.

There we are then; fairly afloat on the wide waste of prairie, eighty-eight all told and all armed, not excepting the nice little Dutch woman, who equipped with German gutturals, and an exhaustless fund of good humor to match, is accompanying her leige lord "for better or worse," faithful as a Ruth. The men, a bold-looking crew, on foot, mounted, or perched upon the baggage, with knives protruding from beneath belts, awkward glimpses of rifle barrels glittering in the sun, and pistols but half hidden, give to the cavalcade quite a formidable and bandit-like air, while the heavy wagons, and the mules surmounted with the Spanish saddles, complete the illusion that the troop has just emerged from a mountain fastness of the ancient Appenines, and are filing away with their treasure to some grand rendezvous of the lawless Clans. But gentle reader, we beg leave to assure you, they are no such persons, but as jolly, generous, and adventurous a band as ever bivouaced on a prairie, or slept under the blue spangled quilt of Heaven, with their knapsacks for pillows. Indeed, he who would find generosity to the half of the last loaf, frankness that startles formality from its disguise, courage that breathes the spirit of Roderick Dhu, intelligence that would make him doubt the utility of the schools, shrewdness that

would put a logician at fault, and a freedom from care that will not leave a sigh for the home—we had almost said "the *girls* he leaves behind him," he must seek it among these and such as these, away in the wild woods and on the plains that God made —men *tinted*, not mellowed by the warm sun of civilization—men not yet afraid to be honest, nor ashamed to be true.

Years are sometimes condensed into a few hours of intense and pleasurable excitement—when, as the saying is, one "lives fast"—enjoys the future by forestalling it, and the present as it passes. Here we were, wantonly weighing the last anchor, or, to speak literally, untying the last tether that bound us to aught we could call home; the dim—the distant—the untried before us; the loved—the left and perhaps the lost behind us. True, visions of the Indian, phrensied from the pow-wow, sometimes flitted across our path and darkened it; the memory of rumors that had deterred many from sharing with us the perils of the camp and the march, sometimes darted like a pang into our hearts; the thought of a grave "unknelled, uncoffined and unknown," and the carnival of wolves and the dirging winds, sometimes crept with a chill and a shudder over the spirit. But the prospect of careering "fancy free," over God's unbounded clearings, where His thousand herds make thunder with their mighty tramp—where horses guiltless of the bit, snuff morning

breezes not more fleet than they—where no one *lives*—a great solitude spread abroad to the day in its own inimitable majesty, yet

> **"Quick with life;**
> **Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers**
> **They flutter over; quadrupeds,**
> **And birds that scarce have learned the fear of man,**
> **Are there, and sliding reptiles of the ground,**
> **Startlingly beautiful"—**

The wild excitement of the chase—the watch-fires of the camp—the sleep so sweet upon the virgin turf—the freedom from the idle forms of artificial life, that make men, after they are born, and lend a touch to nature, that withers and confines—all rush on the thought, and bid the memory hush, the vision disappear, the cloud dispel, and "Richard is *himself* again!"

CHAPTER SECOND

First night out—Harmony Mission—California Company—Indians.

SIX miles out and a halt on the banks of a turbid little stream that delights in the high-sounding sobriquet of "Big Blue," which swollen by a freshet, and the accumulated waters of the "Little Blue," "North Blue," "South Blue" and Blue Devils, if experience is worth anything in Geography, rushed along at the rate of two miles an hour, forty feet wide, four of mud and two of water. Upon the banks of this western Rubicon, did we like Caesar linger, with a huge *sponge* of a hill, on the opposite bank, and a perfect *dye* of it, in prospect for the following morning. A Gordian tangle of blue streams is knotted just here, and to the great scandal of Temperance Societies be it spoken, could not be approached without getting decidedly blue. Promiscuously encamped on the banks of this classic river, novices had their first experience in "camping out," and a rich scene it was to be sure. Some hied away to the woods and returned laden with boughs, scarcely greener than they, wherewith they would make a bower—not exactly for their *fair* but their *fare*, but a month's tuition initiates them bravely into the

mysteries of comfort in the wild life of the prairies, when a dry blanket is a luxury, a crust of sweet bread and a draught of pure water no despicable comforts, and the privilege of standing on the leeward side of a baggage wagon, in a stormy night, no contemptible privilege. The "chips having been picked up," the fires kindled, the first rasher of bacon sliced with the awkward looking blade of a bowie knife, from the thirty pounds with which every man was supplied, the bread, "half and half," that is, pounded parched corn and wheat-flower, having taken its turn in the "spider," and been propped up on two sticks before the fire, for the purpose of "doing brown," we whiled away the hours by shooting at a mark, fancying the target a fine, fat buffalo, an antelope or a villainous Blackfoot.

That first night out was damper to the ardor of many a romantic spirit. The buffalo robe spread upon the earth beside the blue river, the blue blanket for a wrapper and the blue sky for a counterpane, a saddle for a pillow down, which by no means signifies a downy pillow, they had ample opportunity for reflection upon what they had left, ere the morning light stole over the little camp. The wild life of a hunter, may be a thing to talk of in carpeted parlors and to sing of in drawing rooms, but it is quite another thing in real life; it has its pleasures, but they receive half their zest from the toils that won them. It has its cares, but they are the cares of to-day, whose

wild exigencies leave no thought for to-morrow or "the evil thereof." No monotony, no life on a sea becalmed, is the tour to Santa Fe, but a moving diorama of stirring and unexpected incidents, that quicken the pulse like an electric thrill, promote a brisk and healthful circulation, develop courage, endurance, presence of mind, generosity and patience, of which the new possessor never before dreamed—in a sentence, it brings out the whole man, physical, mental and moral, as it compels him to rely upon his own resources, the "reserved rights" which Nature had placed within, and exhibits him measurably free from restraint, trusting only to his own right arm and good rifle, for his temporal salvation. To crown all, as will be perceived, it enriches a man with bits of home-made philosophy, gems of which the author of the "Pioneers" well attributed to shrewd, old "Leather-Stocking."

A nice time we had of it, crossing the "Big Blue," but as it was but the beginning of the preface of a volume to follow, suffice it to say, that when one has the fortune to slip from a restive mule, in the midst of such a stream, and sink gently down—down, like the descent of the angel to the "Babes in the Woods," into a heterogeneous compound of blue clay, water and slime, a very cheap and luxurious *feel* (we know of no more appropriate word) it gives one, much like sinking into a hogshead of eels. The train again in motion, we made Westport,

a little trafficking village in the twilight of better times, thrown on, by the farthest wave of semi-civilization upon western plains. This left, we are at once adrift beyond the pale of society, "a law unto ourselves." After a day's ride through plains fragrant with the freshest imprint of the opening year, we emerged all at once from a thicket of oaks and shrubbery, upon the borders of a broad and well cultivated farm, with a neat and commodious brick mansion. Several hundred Indian children were scattered at play or labor over the fields, happy as little princes and their sisters, and the hum of their merry voices floated to our ears on the soft air of evening. The smoke calmly rising from the chimnies, the sheen of the windows burnished by the setting sun, the fields with the traces of tillage fresh upon them, reminded us of the homes we had left behind us, and almost wondering why we had wandered away, we pitched our camp upon an eminence, commanding a view of the HARMONY MISSION HOUSE and farm, for such it was, that lay unrolled like a picture just from the burin of a master. The manner in which the affairs of this little community are conducted, reflects credit alike upon the teacher and the taught, the projector and his executors.

The Baptists and Friends have stations in the vicinity. Just think of it, ye lovers of the comic—a lazy Shawnee squaw, fat as Dame Quickly, Falstaff's loquacious landlady, with a dress of drab and

a chrysalis-looking bonnet, "of the most straitest" cut of old William's sect, trudging on behind her lord and master, himself attired in the plainest of all plain snuff-colored coats, a collar *a la militaire*, his straight, black hair flowing down beneath a hat of brim *in extenso!* 'Tis a picture Catlin failed to put upon the canvas.

The following day we took up the line of march, and "rested from our labors" in a beautiful grove, whose green leaves, ere our arrival, we perceived to be crimsoned with the light of campfires, that shot wild and fitful gleams upon the groups of strangers who had anticipated us, giving an air of the picturesque to the whole scene. We found them to be the California Company's advance—eight families and thirty in all; fine looking, athletic men whom nature had wrapt in mantles of "fear-naught," and noble women of Amazonian bearing, whose lungs had never been deprived of the free, full play they were made for, nor their waists "narrow'd, cribb'd, confin'd" by the admirable devices of the fashionable suicide. Educated on the Arkansas frontier, they were just such a band as can thrive on the wild soil of the Pacific shore, and hew out for themselves a home in the unbroken wilderness. Let nobody think us enthusiastic, or worse, relative to the California maidens. True, they had not the polish that glitters and fascinates in the *salons* of Paris, neither did they need it, for we have yet to learn that mind

like marble, must not first be chipped with the heavy blows of a rude hammer—that the chisel must not be roughly applied, ere the delicate tracings of the graver can bring out the hidden character, and the hand's soft palm render the surface already clouded and veined, glossy and warm as with the touch of life. Ah! they err who polish, polish ever, for the graceful character like the graceful statue is developed by asperity and softened and moulded by the thousand gentler touches of each day's being. It matters not, Californian, Comanche, anything, but a *Caffree,* may thus receive a polish that fashion cannot give, and be numbered with those whom Nature in her sternest modes would touch with the only blade that can make them truly noble—noble as the mountain, carved out from the solid globe, "rock-ribb'd and ancient as the sun," that defies the thunder of Heaven, and anon, clothed in enchantment and azure, catches the first blushes of morning, and glows with the purple and gold of the closing day. Bidding farewell to the Californians and the episode, and giving the slip to a couple of days, just at sunset of the second, we descended a precipitous declivity to a place of which nothing remained but the name—Elm Grove, and one solitary Logan of a stricken tree.

"To mark where an Elm Grove had been."

A beautiful rivulet bubbled forth from the base of the hill, and as we wound our way down, we spied

a single camp fire, certain utensils that old hunters wot of, a matronly looking horse tethered near by, and a juvenile specimen of the genus *equus*, capering and curvetting in all the glee of colthood, but no man vouchsafed (what a word!) to make his appearance. At length, having reached the valley, we found a Spaniard beneath the projecting bank, busily engaged in preparing some fish for his supper. He was an old hunter in Mexican costume, who had been awaiting our good company to Santa Fe for ten days, and from the number of anatomic remains in the shape of fish and flesh bones that lay strewn around, he had not been idle. One of those self-relying characters that we see only on the confines of the world that man makes, he had dwelt and wandered alone in the midst of the wilderness, with as much *sang froid* as in civilized regions, one goes up stairs to bed. There they were—the Spaniard and the tree—and there we found them. With the tremendous accession of a whole camp, man, kettle, colt, and all but the tree, we started with the day, and had the felicity of dining—don't smile—dining, not with a silver but a jolly set, (should we say sett?) on a spot that has been in all times and lands the pilgrim's delight, where the trio of shade, wood and water dwell together in blessed proximity. For twenty-two miles on from this spot, a natural, ridge road winds away westerly, rambling like the old Meander, between the head-waters of the Kan-

sas or Caw on the North-east and the Osage on the South-west. This road varies from the width of a carriage track to ten rods, and is known by traders and hunters as the "Narrows."

Traveling fifteen miles on this natural highway, we encamped just before sunset on a high bluff of just sufficient area for the disposal of wagons, mules and men. No ordinances in force in those regions against obstructions; no officious gatekeeper extends his hand for the "splendid shilling." Scenes of changeful beauty, such as panorama never pictured, "dissolving views" magically melting into azure and shadow, reappearing in glimpses of loveliness and light, blending, then expanding to the blue verge of vision, meet the eyes of the traveler at every step, startling him with a beauty that strikes into the very woof of the soul. We envy for once the skill that is hidden in the painter's pencil, that we might reproduce that picture upon the canvas. From that bluff, we looked away to the North and East, upon the silver windings of the Kansas, now hidden by clusters of shrubbery, now skirted by forest trees that stand like genii of the stream upon its banks—now lost in the dim distance, that stretches like a veil between us and Heaven. A hundred feet beneath, lay a verdant plain, carpeted with blue grass, spangled with flowers, and clumped with islet groves, temples which Nature reared and consecrated to her God; Indian Mounds rise here and there like little bil-

lows, greened and turfed by time. A little at the right, a dense forest stretched away, its lofty tops kindling and golden in the light of the setting sun, while the plain below, with its mounds and islets and flowers, was mantled in shadow, and the gurgling of the Kansas head-waters came up to our ears like the refrain of some sweet old song.

In the distance, large numbers of Indian horses were quietly grazing. Behind us, on the South-west and but a few feet from our encampment, deep ravines like long-drawn aisles or dimly lighted corridors, led away, festooned with grapevines and clustering honeysuckles, beyond which, the head-waters of the Osage dashed and murmured along on their journey, to mingle with the Missouri and the Father of rivers. For miles, these natural halls opened away from the ridge on our left, at intervals of a few yards. Altogether it was a scene, that once beheld, is not easily forgotten; that prompts the wish for a fire-new dialect in which to clothe the images of beauty that even at this distance of time, rise at our bidding, and fill the halls of memory with the brightness of yesterday. It was one of the few scenes that can waken the poetic feeling that slumbers in the bosom of trappers, hunters and guides—a scene that realized in the midst of the wilderness, what Tom Moore sighed for, when he sang,

"Oh! had we some sweet little isle of our own!"

Beautiful as was the landscape, yet the hunter's *penchant* led us to the plains below, attracted thither by "signs" of turkies, to say nothing of the plover and curlew that were shot by scores. In the forest bordering on the natural meadows, we have attempted to describe, we discovered a deer track, and presently another suspicious looking print, which proved to be that of a horse's foot. Now as it was neither cloven nor clawed, it may not seem worthy the adjective we have thrown away upon it, but when the reader remembers that *our* horses were mules, the idea will not be far behind, that some son of the red race might be "out" without the knowledge of his fraternal relatives, the pale faces. The shrill crack of a rifle hard by, occurred simultaneously with a bound made by at least one listener behind a tree, for it is generally understood that unfortunate accidents have resulted from the *careless handling* of firearms. Presently crack went the same rifle, again and with becoming modesty, we moved an adjournment, always in order, (see Jefferson's Manual, *passim*) and drew a bee line for camp.

It is enough to say that the adjournment was effected *sine die*, which anglicised signifies without a die, and on gaining the camp, the sight of a turkey, answering the precise conditions of the cynic's definition of Plato's man—a featherless biped—whirling in the "roaster's waltz" before the fire, banished all thought of " 'scapes" and scalping knives, as seated

on the ground, we discussed the merits of the bird most amicably. Indians of the Caws or Osages were doubtless prowling in the vicinity, for the purpose of kidnapping a mule or two, it being pretty generally conceded, that in the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum*, these children of the forest are not strictly orthodox.

On the following morning, we left one of the most beautiful scenes upon which the eye ever rested—left it alone in the midst of the solitude.

CHAPTER THIRD

"One Hundred and Ten"—Black Wolf the Delaware—Culinary "Doings"—Antelopes—Something of a Shower—Council Grove—The "Leather Stockings" of the Mountains.

N our passage over a beautiful prairie, watered by a small stream filled with fish, and rising here and there with mounds swelling with the cherished dust of the Indian dead, we met about twenty Spanish Mexicans of the Chihuahua return Company, and a wild set of fellows they were, ragged as beggars and saucy as lackeys. Of course they brought no "latest dates," no papers damp from the press and fresh from home. They were headed by CHAVEZ, the Mexican trader, who was subsequently murdered upon the plains by a party of frontier outlaws, two of whom were executed for the crime, and one or two imprisoned as having been accessory. Besides a hundred extra mules, they had driven the remnant of a flock of sheep, all that had escaped their mutton-eating capacities. Like ships at sea, the two cavalcades neared each other, and for a moment staid their course—"what cheer?" "All well," "Indians?" "None"—"Heipah!" cries the Mexican leader—"Go on!" shouts our captain, and the rolling

prairie soon separates the twain, to meet no more "by ship or shore" forever.

The road is a plain, beaten track, from old Fort Osage, twenty miles below Independence, our rendezvous, to the mountain Pass, and on the United States survey is laid down as 960 miles; the usual route however is much farther. By treaty with the Indian tribes, a right of way for the trade was secured—a strip of land five miles in width being reserved, lying, like a ribbon lost from the streamer of our national banner, along those immense plains to the far mountains. At a small grove called "One hundred and ten," its name indicating the distance from the Fort, we encamped, "struck a light," despatched our supper and betook ourselves to Raleigh's quiet luxury—sacred be the memory of Sir Walter! Smoke-cured, it lasteth forever, and with pipes, if not with dances, shall it be commemorated till the last whiff of tired Nature shall be blent with the blue of Heaven. "Old Rosin the bow" was then sung like a tempest by the jolly fellows around the campfires—the tenor died away, and the treble and the bass, as one after another "turned in." "Blessings on his head who invented sleep" said Sancho Panza, but then they had no Mosquitos in that early day, for no sooner had the hunters ceased their song, than these chivalrous little souls took up the *alto; adagissimo dolcissimo—andante con affetto—presto prestissimo—poco a poco—lacrimando pizzicato—*

finale. Thus went the serenade all the night long, interspersed with sundry illustrations (*argumentum ad hominem*) of the sword exercise.

"But joy cometh in the morning," and at an early hour, we were "under weigh," and had not proceeded far, ere four Mexican wagons hove in sight, a rear detachment of the caravan we had already met. Black Wolf, head chief of the Delawares, was returning with them from Mexico, whither he had been on a diplomatic mission that proved unsuccessful. A form indicating great agility and strength, whose every muscle had been developed by exercise, aquiline features that bore in every lineament, from the eagle eye to the compressed lip, the picture of decision and courage the costume of a chief and the bearing, the indescribable *hauteur* of a warrior, sitting upon a powerful California horse that seemed to obey his will rather than his word, he was altogether a noble specimen of the American Indian. His head was bare, and his free locks floating upon his shoulders, disclosed a broad expanse of forehead. A hunting shirt of buckskin in-wrought with fanciful and strange devices, gathered round his waist with a belt of wampum; his leggings of the same material, tastefully fringed, the work doubtless of some favorite squaw, the sheath of a formidable knife projecting from beneath his belt, and a rifle carelessly lying in the hollow of one arm, while with the other, he smoothed the neck of his good steed,

you have the picture before you, faintly but faithfully drawn, of the head chief of the Delawares.

The unsuccessful mission to which allusion has been made, was for the purpose of making preliminary arrangements with the Mexicans, to bring his forces into the field against the hostile tribes, who were becoming bolder and bolder in their attacks upon the frontier, even making incursions into the interior of that country. Beneath those ebon locks, other plans for battle and its spoils, were undoubtedly already hatching. The Delawares, a bold and reckless band, obtained permission to accompany us on from the Arkansas river. The unanticipated return of their chief blighted their prospect of many scalps, and ours of powerful allies. The Mexicans passed on, and we were again alone. Four Kansas or Caw Indians armed cap-a-pie, especially the *cap,* presently met us; their heads shaven with the exception of a crest about two inches in width, extending from the sinciput to the occiput and brushed up most furiously, while the shorn regions of their phrenological developments were painted a decided red. They looked very fierce, unnecessarily so, as they were only seeking an opportunity to *find* a mule or two, for the definition of which, *vide* second volume Caw Lexicon, under the word "steal." They turned back with us however, and an hour's ride brought us to their camp, two squaws on guard. A traffick in honey was immediately pro-

posed on their part, an article with which the country almost literally "flows." That adventurous colonist the bee, "winds his mellow horn," wherever Nature has lighted a flower and the fingers of Decay have wrought out for the little denizen, a log-cabin in some old forest tree. It is a touching and almost a mournful thought, that the wild flowers and the bees are flying away before the iron tread of civilization—that they must ere long be banished from the revolving globe, driven to a shore whence there is neither advance nor retreat. Milton's Eve as she hung over her favorites in Eden, exclaimed in the language of prophetic sorrow,

"Oh! flowers
That never will in other garden grow."

They did go forth into the broad world; in the depth of the woods and in far wilds they are lingering, till the ax shall cut away the columns of Nature's temples, and the share shall rend the unsullied mosaic of her halls, then Indian, bee and flower will fly together, to the land of the setting sun.

In conversation with these venders of sweets, we learned that they had a Missionary among them—"very good white man"—"got 'em four squaw"—"heap papoose," so they talked of him, but they *must* have meant some graceless trader, and "missionary" was a misnomer!

Twelve days out and a hundred and forty-five miles from Independence, we arrived at Council

Grove, which *is* a grove, and as the ladies would say, "a *love* of a place." Watered by one of the crystal tributaries of the Osage, the noble trees rising like columns from the green, and level earth, and springing with their interlacing boughs, the lofty arches of true old Gothic, the Indian tribes whose eyes, with all the stoicism their *hearts* boast of, are quick to catch the beautiful in Nature with whom they are constantly communing, selected this spot and consecrated it, as its name indicates, to national councils, the wampum belt, the pipe of peace, the festive sports and "green corn dances." There is a beauty, almost a sublimity in the thought, that while wars have raged around it, and the streams that circle it, have blushed with the blood of kindred, no cry of vengeance or shout of defiance, rising to Heaven, has ever quivered *those* forest tops. As we lay upon its green turf, the unavailing wish more than once rose to our lips for utterance, that the slumbering echoes of the dusky maiden's laugh, and the merry voices of the youthful braves and the grave intonations of the wise old men and dauntless chiefs, might for once be reawakened in that splendid temple, now so silent, but so sacred to "the memory of joys that are past."

Wandering through this splendid grove of Sugar Maple, Oak and Elm, birds, whose plumage would brighten the eyes of Audubon, flew away before us, or darting into the shrubbery, disappeared from

view. Whole families of paroquets in their gay liveries of green and gold, chattered and scolded most saucily at, or about us, we could not tell which; while glossy-coated squirrels with a chirrup, a whistle and a bound, flashed up the trunks of old trees and were "not at home" to us in an instant. But the most beautiful creature, and graceful tenant of this lovely dwelling, was the antelope, which might well be termed the American Gazelle, for its bright eyes, its slight form, its slender limbs and graceful motions. Its horns are recurved like a crescent; when it walks, it scarcely brushes the dew from the grass, and when it runs, it seems almost to fly. The most beautiful of the deer kind, like the *dearer* and the "better half" of *our* race, it is gifted with a wonderful share of curiosity, for the fluttering of a bandana will lure it within the range of a rifle.

They are easily domesticated, playful, and, as may be inferred from our previous description, very affectionate. But what are they good for, says the Yankee, with the *utile* ever "before his eyes." Ask the hunters, who, like their illustrious exemplar, John Hook of "beef" memory, could wander through scenes of so much beauty and mutter, *sotto voce,* "venison—venison;" or those, who seated like so many "knights of the thimble," around the campfires, did ample justice to an antelope that some lucky sportsman had brought in—Anthropophagi as they were!

A part of our company being yet in the rear, and we "the first out," the proposal was made to await their arrival, unship, overhaul, wash, mend, cut spare axletrees, equip and renew generally; which multitudinous proposition was accepted by acclamation. Then opened a scene that "consigns description to the poor-house."

Thirty-three wagon loads of trunks, boxes, bags and bundles were strewn around, and their contents severally and collectively, unfolded, suspended, spread out, heaped up, in a confusion apparently inextricable. Kettles of water were swung over the fires, and straightway, we all fell to washing. This done, one and another betook themselves to the needle, with a Dorcas-like diligence and dexterity. Here a huge fellow of a hunter, practicing pugilistics upon a quantity of some clammy-looking substance, politely called dough, kneading and knuckling as if for dear life. There a stalwart trapper "running the heel" of a pair of socks, while some lazy joker near by, amused himself by "running a saw" upon a companion. Now and then the rifle-crack of some strolling hunter was heard from the timber or over the bluff; our hundreds of mules were quietly grazing upon the prairie adjoining the grove, and except the Turks and turbans, the whole resembled an oriental Caravansary scene, or a Gipsy group without their women, babies and red cloaks.

After a sojourn of three days, the delinquents arrived, and leaving this beautiful spot, we set forth upon the wide and literally howling wilderness. At night "the windows of heaven were opened," and we were thoroughly penetrated with the truth of the saying, "it never rains but it pours." Lying as quietly as kittens beneath our blankets, down it came, till the robes we lay on, were fairly afloat, and a very perceptible degree of dampness was experienced—the first stage of Hydropathic treatment. After a delectable drenching, dragging our heavy blankets after us, we crept beneath the wagons, where axletrees, wheels and chains prolonged the shower for a full hour, each drop enriched with homoepathic portions of dirt, tar and grease. Thus we passed the night, and after a tedious ride of sixteen miles over a prairie in a very tearful and penitential state, we forgot our troubles, as we cracked jokes and crisped fish, round a bright, cheerful fire, in the bend of the "Cottonwood Fork."

Two days subsequent to the incidents just mentioned, as we were preparing to move on, a troop of Mountain Trappers hove in sight, and came up like a herd of buffalo, with their pack-mules laden with furs and robes, and seventeen wagons in train. Fine specimens of bronzed humanity were they all, attired in buckskin, and beknived, betrapped, begrimed and berifled—mountaineers, *ad unguem,, to* the very *claw*. Men, emphatically *sui generis*, their

life is a constant scene of peril and excitement.

Scattering away from the several trading posts, in companies numbering from one to five, they climb the rugged steeps and descend into the mountain gorges, and wandering over the plains and along the streams, they set their traps for that mason and mill-wright, the beaver. Never contesting the right of their red brethren to engage in the same pursuit, they hunt and trap most amicably on the same waters, but if as sometimes happens, an Indian is found dead, killed of course by an *accidental* shot, the *furs* which he had collected, are modestly transferred to the pack of the finder, which is doubtless very proper, in those wild regions. Occasionally, a Trapper meets a similar fate, and the Indian affectionately reciprocates the favor, and the whole proceeding is conducted with a commendable spirit of kindness and fraternal regard! Like treacherous Turks, they neither eat salt nor bread and raw liver dipped in the gall of the animal killed is often a desirable dish. Rare living this, for those who have been dandled in the lap of ease, and yet many there are, who break from the charmed circles of love and home, and for years and years wander amid the wild and savage haunts of the dim and distant mountains.

This troop from the hills delighted us with the information that twelve hundred Comanches had assembled on the Cimarron river, for the very innocent

purpose of effecting a treaty with the Arapahoes or Shians, that they might secure a home and a way to it, among the latter, if the Texans should serve upon them a writ of ejectment from the banks of the Red River; all this, of course, without an eye to the trade, the mules and the "plunder." It was a pleasant reflection, that we might be shot, scalped, and for aught we knew, drawn and quartered, but well-armed and strong with hope, the majority determined "to die game." Two or three of the company, shivering at the thought of running the gauntlet, sharp knives, stakes and hot fires, were half inclined to enact Lot's wife, but the shadowy dangers closing up behind us, cut off their retreat, and twenty days out, found us beyond the South Branch of Turkey Creek, and passing over plains alive with antelopes that were skipping and bounding in high glee over the plains. Precisely how much they were indebted to the Indians in prospect, for the impunity they enjoyed, we are not prepared to say, but that the ardor of the sportsman was merged in the chilling thought of approaching and perhaps fatal conflict, does not admit of a doubt.

The Little Arkansas falling into the main river, a few miles from our route, was crossed upon a floating bridge which the advance party had constructed, and in an hour, the whole troop were, for the first time united, while a reinforcement of eight men bound for California, confirmed us in our purpose

to pass through the Indian territory peacefully even if compelled *"to conquer it."* The scene upon which we now entered, had but little in consonance with the beautiful Eden through which our way had hitherto led us. The sterile plain was substituted for the undulating prairie, the hard, red loam for the rich, alluvial soil, the fine tufted buffalo grass for the waving meadows, the wide waste and stinted shrub for the forest skirtings, the daring wolf for the timid deer, the buzzard and the raven for birds of song. The dews which had hitherto spangled blade, leaf and flower, here ceased to fall; in a word, we had launched upon a boundless and almost pathless wild, with but a solitary track, like a lonely wake in the midst of the sea, to mark the previous passage of a human being. If ever one can feel the sentiment of the poet, when he sang,

> **"Footprints, that perhaps another,**
> **Sailing o'er life's solemn main,**
> **A forlorn and ship wreck'd brother,**
> **Seeing, may take heart again,"**

it is on the rolling deep, or amid the awful immensity and oppressive solitudes of the western plains. Surrounded by a prospect, whose far horizon is curved not till it touches the sky, man shrinks into his own insignificance; a painful thought of desolation and helplessness steals over and chills the full pulses of conscious strength; a human footprint is like a glad word from far, and he is sighing for the

wood girt home in the midst of the hills, his childish feet once pressed,

When all the world by Heaven's blue hoverings blest,
Like wood-doves nestled in one little breast!

In admirable keeping with the scene, was a group of wolves performing their horrid rites of sepulture over an ox that Bent's company had lost. Of this immemorial emblem of meanness, ferocity and cowardice, there are only five varieties—what a pity! —black wolves and white, yellow and gray, never forgetting an insignificant, long-tailed prowler, that is constantly sneaking about the camp, and serenading us with a melody in nowise proportioned to the zeal and strength of lungs displayed by this musical amateur.

After a day's ride over this cheerless region, we had the supreme felicity of depositing ourselves for a night upon the banks of a streamlet, that delighted in the appropriate and poetical appellation of Owl Creek. Indeed the names given to all the streams that water these regions, are significant, either indicative of the tenantry that abide in their vicinity, or commemorative of some scrap of Indian tradition. Creeks unnumbered; Shoal, Elm, Cotton-Wood, Turkey, Owl, Cow, Walnut, Ash, Coon, Sand and Rock, besides forks enough for a dinner set, among which Mud, Pawnee and North, play a conspicuous part.

Ten or twelve of the company went out in quest of buffalo, and after a weary and protracted chase, succeeded in running down a—track; the manufacturer of which, was labelled, *non est comatabus,* having probably passed that way a few days before! On the banks of Cow Creek, so called from a tradition that an enormous buffalo was slain there in the olden time, we organized the company. Having now entered the Indian country, system, vigilance and courage could alone avert injury or utter destruction. All the members of the expedition were therefore enrolled, eighty-eight in number, *ci-devant* Episcopal clergyman, and three invalids included, always saving and excepting the pretty little woman before mentioned. Although our chaplain was numbered with the lady and the invalids, it was only upon the principle of the legislators of the "Empire State," who in enumerating persons exempted from Military and highway duty, place Idiots, students of Theology, and Clergymen in the same category, just to save a section. Clergyman as he was, his extemporaneous allusions to the Supreme Being were anything but clerical, and prompted the friendly wish that "Uncle Toby's" angel might yet keep record in Heaven's High Chancery, and her eyes like the "weeping prophet's," a fountain of tears, that she might blot them out forever. Alas! for the frailties of poor human nature—let them be touched lightly.

Houck, one of the oldest and most experienced traders was announced as candidate for Captain, and elected by acclamation.

Old Aeolus, Governor of all the winds, never received more breezy demonstrations of the loyalty of his subjects. The Captain chose eight sergeants, who detailed the guard in rotation. Unexpectedly elevated from "private" life, to be one of the aforementioned eight, the writer was fortunate in obtaining a set of first-rate fellows, always saving and excepting a lump of a Dutchman, who combined the surliness of the mastiff with the stubbornness of the mule. Each detachment consisted of eleven men, who stood alternately every other night for two hours. Upon the sergeant devolved the duty of stationing, keeping them and himself awake, and disturbing the slumbers of their successors. It being our fortune to stand sentry first, the guard were duly stationed, and our first experience of camp duty was compressed within two hours of shivering, fog, darkness and dingy meditation, when happily relieved, we turned in, mentally rejoicing in the wisdom of rotation.

CHAPTER FOURTH

Method of traveling and defence—Stampedo—Prairie Dogs—First Buffalo—Bathing in the Arkansas.

A SOLDIER-LIKE vigilance now marked every proceeding. The wagons which had hitherto, "like an Arcadian song, drawn their slow length along," now moved regularly in parallel lines, separated by a distance of fifty feet, two abreast, so that in case of attack, they could almost instantly be transformed into a breast-work of wagons and mules. The camp was formed with equal expedition. Fancy two lines of vehicles, sixteen in each, to be suddenly stopped; the two advance wagons brought together and the remainder so disposed as to permit the hind wheel of each to be securely locked to the forward wheel of the next in rear, the long tongues bristling out obliquely from the hollow oval thus formed, and the wagons all bound by chains; the camp-fires kindled outside the barricades; two hundred mules tethered to stakes with ropes thirty feet in length, forming the outer circle, while the sentry stationed at proper intervals form the periphery of these "wheels within wheels," and you have the picture of a *"Corral"* on the western plains, as

the Spanish term an encampment thus fortified. In case of an attack, the mules are hastily driven into the oval area, the way of ingress is secured by ropes and chains, every man to his rifle, and "come one—come all!" the watchword. Simple as is the arrangement, it presents a Gibraltar-like defence, against any weapons known in Indian warfare.

When the mules becoming frightened, and absolutely unmanageable, break from the stakes and dash away over the plains, with distended nostrils and auricular organs vigorously erect, the long ropes trailing after them making for some distant herd of buffalo, that, inspired with the contagious panic, dash away like the steed of Tam O'Shanter, gathering numbers as they rush on like an avalanche, we have a grand "strike" which the Spaniards expressively term a *Stampedo*.

Wolves—wolves—gray, growling and lean, sneak away in troops before us or howl on our trail, greedily devouring the offal and impatiently awaiting, we dare not think what. To-day we arrived at a populous town in the midst of the waste—a settlement of Prairie Dogs. These little people are a pattern of neatness and neighborly kindness; their municipal regulations are admirable; the "city fathers" vigilant and efficient. The opening to each burrow is surrounded by a circular wall about six inches in height, constructed with Germanic ingenuity, which prevents the water that inundates

the plains in the rainy seasons of the year from transforming their comfortable dwellings into cisterns, The little area within this dike, serves as an observatory for the lodgers below stairs, who sit bolt upright upon the little shelf within, in their brown overcoats of Nature's putting on, formal and prim as so many maiden ladies at a quilting. At the first intimation of uninvited guests, such a yelping, whining and barking as they set up, would do honor to her Majesty's kennel at Windsor; at a nearer approach, there is a twinkling of heels, a turning—not of keys, but of somersets, and, to pervert a legal phrase, in an instant, the whole *posse comitatus,* cannot possibly be come at, but "not at home—not at home" is the word, an apparent evacuation of the whole town.

These worthy burghers admit the "Burrowing Owl" as a lodger, who undoubtedly pays his rent by standing sentry "o'nights," and a character in a parti-colored coat, remarkable for his humble way of getting through the world, plays watchman to the establishment, and springs his rattle upon occasion. Whether he quarters himself upon the Dogs, "nilly willy" or is regarded in the light of a poor relation, is not clearly understood, although from the spacious apartments of this subterranean house-keeper and the smallness of his *person,* being about the size of a muskrat, he might well afford sleeping room to his snakeship. Altogether they form an extraordinary

household, and are worthy the attention of political economists, for "who is who," as the saying runs, which is master and which is man, no "bill of rights," Declaration or Manifesto has ever been issued to set forth. With a parting salute discharged over the heads or rather the heels of these loquacious little citizens, we passed on to a salt marsh; the margins of its miniature seas, where the water had evaporated, were encrusted, with pure salt, an eighth of an inch in thickness. Snipe, Curlew and Marlin "kept our hands in," thus furnishing us at once with fun and food, the dessert first.

"Leafy June" found us quietly despatching our dinner on the bank of "Ash Creek," and with no epicurean *siesta,* we "caught up" and set forward, but no buffalo yet! The melancholy of the "green horns" was becoming each day darker, deeper, and more decidedly chronic. Some were "sighing like a furnace" to do terrific execution among those that "divide the hoof;" others only wished that they might not die without the sight, just the sight of one wild leader of the herds, while others again, with the true gastronomic gust, ran over their bill of fare—tenderloin, and that knightly part, sirloin, brisket, hump, and—oh! delectable morsel!—the tongue.

Slowly and sadly moved the train, wagon after wagon with its ten mules, postillion and ponderous load; the scouting party as usual had taken the

place of their dispirited companions, the writer among the number, who had returned from a weary and profitless jaunt, and were now playing "whips" in turn, to the troops of ears and their owners, that formed the locomotive power of the caravan. The cry, "Buffalo!" sent a thrill of life through the lines, like that other cry "She blows!" from the lookout on board a Whaler, nine months out and not a barrel. There they were to be sure, two noble monarchs of the herd, under full motion, shaking a cloud of dust from their shaggy heads, and lumbering along like elephants in the distance.

The scene was now one of wild excitement. Mounted, and on foot, away they went, hither and thither, and even the long-eared gentry seemed to feel an interest in the *melee*, as with looks of wisdom, they eyed proceedings *"arrectis auribus,"* with ears pricked up. Away rushed the novices, with visions of tongues and steaks put "to do" in the ovens of their heated imaginations, and bales of furs nicely packed, were stowed in the attic of their fancies. All these achievements to be performed by men who could scarcely hit one of the United States once in three shots, much less a buffalo under motion! The causes of all this bustle were scarcely heeded by the old hunters, so amused were they with the fierce preparation and extensive calculations of the "science" sportsmen.

The little Frenchman was skipping about brisk as

a flea, propounding all sorts of inquiries relative to the mysteries of cooking "de grand buffalo," now to this one, and now to that, receiving a solution from nobody; "how you cook 'em—ha?" "As you would a dolphin, Monseer," cries one, "first catch 'em—"As you do frogs" exclaims another. The subjects of this culinary catechism, meanwhile, seemed to have urgent business at the East, and kept on. The mounted hunters however, soon turned them towards the wagons, following them with yells, shouts, whoops and a scattering fire, "which played round their heads but came not to their hearts." On they rushed, until their eyes glittering and almost green with rage ,were distinctly visible, gleaming like witches' fire from beneath their curled and shaggy frontlets. We too gave them a broadside, that only served as a *presto* to a tune, quickening their motion. The mountain hunters now mingled in the fray; crack—crack—went the shrill rifles one after another like a Revolver, when one of the fugitives, a surly old fellow suddenly wheeled and stood ready for fight. It was indeed the last instinct of a noble animal at bay, but it availed nothing, and a good shot brought him to the ground. The eager troop of claimants for a share, gathered round the victim yet warm with life; but the mules had a repugnance to "sights" that was by no means characteristic of their riders. This little difference of opinion led to some striking arguments, which by

no means lessened the confusion. One fellow came riding up in John Gilpin plight, towards the slaughtered animal, fully determined to be "in at the death," get glory and a dinner. On he came with the air of a dragon, when the sagacious quadruped snuffing the blood-taint in the air, made an emphatic pause. Now had his rider taken the hint and paused also, he would have saved the writer a sentence, the reader its perusal and himself a tumble, but on he went, positively clearing the tedious ears of his donkeyship, and describing a beautiful aerial curve with his heels he alighted upon the ground, dislocating his shoulder and receiving some more tokens of his Quixotic and rather undutiful attack upon his mother Earth. It was decidedly an impromptu in the way of lofty and ground tumbling, worthy of Astley's ampitheatre in its palmy days. Thus a slight "falling out" between the mule and his rider occasioned a "falling-off" on the part of the latter, and a "falling through" of his hopes of glory.

The excitement subsided, and in a few moments, nothing but a wreck of the noble animal remained, whose appearance had quickened the pulses of nearly an hundred men. That form of animated strength was hanging in fragments at the saddle bows of the hunters, and subsequently transferred to the forked sticks and the kettles at the camp-fires on the bank of the "Great Bend."

The banks of the Arkansas are varied with gradual

and grassy slopes gently declining to the water's edge, and now washed out and abrupt; thirty rods in width, the stream pours along over the gently inclining plain, with here and there a lone cottonwood tree standing like a sentinel upon its banks, and guiding the eye as it is strained to mark the route of its boiling, turbid current.

There on that beautiful spot, we lighted our fires, and cooked as hunter's best know how, the rich slices of buffalo meat, parallelograms, cubic and polygonal, all richly lined with the white and red of a well-conditioned animal. Talk of the homely fare of the Western Hunter, as you will—bring your condiments from the land of spices, as you please—decorate your tables with the service of silver or gold as you may, but the life of the hunter—the weary march, the long chase, lend a richer relish to the simple slice of buffalo, than experience can devise or affluence procure. The heat and the accumulated dust of travel, drove a party of us to the river for a bathe, and having disrobed for the luxury, we were standing upon the bank quieting some misgivings which the rapidity of the current and the Missouri-aspect of the waters naturally awoke, when the cry "Indians! Indians!" disturbed our deliberations, and such a scattering, scrambling and skulking was seldom witnessed. One for his unmentionables, another for his rifle, and a third for his boots, while one fellow, whose wits were reported "not

present" upon the occasion having seized his rifle, was attempting, in a state of primeval innocence as he was, *to feel in his vest pocket for a percussion cap!* It was too much for the risibles of those who had plotted the alarm, and an uproarous laugh put an end to the fears and the flight together. Some of the company, chagrined at the *denouement* of the affair, plunged into the stream, apparently so dark and deep and tumbling, and found themselves nicely pillowed on a gravel bottom, in about *four inches scant!* Little French, bubbling over with sympathy at the *scrape* into which we had gotten, consoled us after a manner peculiar to himself. "You no be one drown man dis time—the bottame catch you ha?" "Yes!" thought we, "but it will not catch us again soon"—and thus ended our evening ablutions in the Arkansas—after the scene, "fish" out of water.

CHAPTER FIFTH

Nature's Silent Worship—A Blind Buffalo—"Uncle Nick"—The Mysterious Stranger.

NO one who has never roamed over the western wilds, and seen the myriads of Buffalo that traverse those immense plains, and furrow it like a fallow with their deep-worn paths, and hide the prospect with a thousand clouds of dust as they rise from their *wallows* and shake their huge heads at the sign of an approaching foe; who has never seen the broad plain stretching away in one mighty circle swept to the verge of the visible world, unbroken by forest or hill, literally dotted, swarming and trembling beneath the tread of the shaggy hosts—to such an one, no words can avail, to paint the idea upon the retina of his mental eye—no description can quicken his imagination to the true conception of that which "eye has not seen." Unmolested, these unappropriated herds of the Almighty, quietly feed upon the green pastures and wander beside the still waters, which seldom give back from their crystal depths, aught but the face of the red man, and the forms of the sleepless stars.

Let the millionaire who dwells in the world of brick and stone, and glories in his coffered treasures,

and catches only now and then a breath of pure air, and exults in his petty herds that sprinkle a hill or two on the Jersey shore, go forth upon the broad prairies, and catch

"The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,"

as it sweeps from the wilds "where rolls the Oregon," and behold the "cattle of a thousand hills" roaming dim as a cloud in the far horizon, and nearer and more distinct, and expanding to shapes of strength, buffalo—every where buffalo, the uncounted herds of the wilderness. A millionaire no longer, he will return to his eastern home, an humbler, and perchance a wiser man.

There Nature has heaved the dome of a pillarless temple, and spread abroad its altars, and laden them with sacrifices, and dedicated them all to the silent worship of the Invisible. The azure curtains of that temple are never thrilled with the song of praise; no volumed incense rises from those altars, fragrant and grateful to the throne. No long-drawn aisles ever echo to the feet of worshippers, for the stealthy tread of the red child of Nature, alone, presses her green and flowery carpet as he lays his votive offerings of blood upon her altar. Pilgrim-Streams may murmur a song as they tell their beads on their journey down to the deep—flowers may lift their chalices brimming with morning dew—"the bridal of the earth and sky" may be solemnized, accord-

ing to the unwritten Rubric of Nature some seventh morn, and the winds may sometimes fold their wings in voiceless worship. This is the mystic devotion which makes man feel himself akin to Nature; when he can almost count the great pulses of the world as they beat in unison with his own.

It is well known to those familiar with Western life, that the buffalo is frequently found wandering over the plains perfectly blind. Age and the fate of battle are said to be the causes of this fearful calamity. Whenever some such noble animal, who had once been leader of the herd, but now alas! deserted and despised, is approached, the low muttering of the huge, ungainly creature may be distinctly heard, as if thus left by the flying drove, he were moralizing upon the ingratitude of his companions and kindred —"so goes the world!"—and bewailing the darkness in which he is perpetually wandering; doubting, fearing and plunging along in interminable night. Oh! it is a fearful thing for man to be blind to have the windows that look as if into Heaven, darkened forever: man, who was formed "with countenance erect," that he *might* look up and catch glimpses of glory at the glance. But even to the beast, whose "spirit goeth downward," the eye is an avenue of pleasures we cannot enumerate, and when that brute is a noble buffalo, his nostrils distended with life and his "neck clothed with thunder," it awakens a tone of sympathy in the mind of the thoughtful.

One day the company were quietly wending their way up the Arkansas, which whirls along in an unequal channel, now widening to a half mile and now contracting to a quarter. A detachment of the party were loitering along some distance in advance of the main body. Upon a small island in the middle of the stream, whose surface was hidden by rank weeds and tangled nettles, they discovered a buffalo quietly grazing. One of the company who had never achieved a more important feat than the depopulation of a warren, proposed to his comrades that they remain upon the bank, while he should ford the river and absolutely sweep *every visible inhabitant* from the island, especially the buffalo. Assent being given, he plunged in like Caesar, and did wade "it with lusty sinews," the turbid water laving his eager sides in a manner most poetical to behold. But as Burns said when his envious ploughshare disturbed the domestic relations of a meadow mouse,

> **"But mousie! thou art not alone,**
> **In proving foresight may be vain,**
> **The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,**
> **Gang oft agley,**
> **An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,**
> **For promised joy!"**

He had scarcely proceeded half way from the river's bank to the island, ere the buffalo took the alarm, and started at a heavy lumbering pace to make his first circle, which brought him to the verge of the island shore. The creature was blind.

On he went, round and round in concentric circles widening at every heat, until plunging over a ten-feet bank, into the deep water, he rose and shaking his huge head bellowed his rage and apprehension. Nothing daunted on he swam, till gaining a foothold, he plunged through the muddy foam, and regained the bank, only to tumble headlong from the opposite point. It was a picture for Parrhasius. His glaring and sightless eyes, tinged with green, rolled fearfully beneath the curled and matted hair, filled with mud and sand. Striking farther into the stream, he made a complete circuit around the island, through the river's bed; sometimes swimming, and sometimes splashing through the current with giant strength like a maddened monster. With each successive round, he neared the shore where the party lay watching the success of their comrade, who returning to *terra firma* rejoined his companions. Shot after shot was fired, taking effect in the enormous hump that heaved like a tower upon the animal's shoulders, which maddened him with pain, and accelerated his tumbling and blinded flight. Another shot galled him to desperation, and dashing his head for an instant deep into the stream, he threw it up laden with mud and sand. His tongue streaked with foam protruded from his open mouth, his eyes rolling fearfully in their sockets, and his tail lashing his reeking sides. Yet round and round, nearer and nearer, until five or six Mexicans who

had by this time arrived, threw the lasso as he passed, which failed to catch upon the horns from the length of the shaggy hair that was curled and tangled around them. His next and last revolution brought him upon the river's bank, directly among men, mules and wagons. The way was cleared before him, with a celerity that never followed the reading of the "riot act." Such a rushing and scattering and scrambling—shouts of "clear the way!" "Take care!" "There he comes!" Away went the Mexicans yelling as though they were under the scalping knife—mules braying, dogs barking, the shouts of the hunters and the crack of rifles. An "old hunter" whose ruling passion had well nigh vanquished his discretion, took to his heels. One unfortunate individual alone suffered the penalty of his perverseness. As the buffalo tossing his head wildly from side to side, plunged on, one of his horns caught just below the equatorial regions of the individual, causing him to turn a complete somerset, landing him not precisely *on* his feet, but several feet distant from the starting point of this rocket excursion. Gathering his ideas and collecting himself a little, he had leisure to note the *tendencies* of things in general and the buffalo in particular. The mule—for we had forgotten to mention that it was one—was however but little injured by this, its first lesson in callisthenics. Some ten or twelve dogs were now set upon the buffalo. Unheeding the danger

that flew thick around him, the doomed creature turned slowly from side to side, and with a toss of his huge head threw his canine assailants yelping into the air. The cracking of the teamsters' whips now reached his ears, and thoroughly infuriated, he dashed toward the wagons, when a well-directed shot put an end to the race and the danger together. The noble but deserted brute ceased to wander in darkness, and according to Indian Mythology is awaiting his red owners upon the "hunting grounds" of the spirit land.

Thus the adventurous hunter wantonly wastes the treasures that Nature taught the Indian to deem his own. Civilization will soon furrow his prairies, his war-paths will be mantled in green or hidden in fields all golden with the harvest; his streams will be curbed and trained to drive the dizzy wheel; his forest haunts will be disclosed to the day, and the mounds of his dead effaced from the globe. The glory of the wigwam has already fled; the song of the braves and the fires of the council are extinguished together, and nought remains to the red children of the Great Spirit, but the hope, simple Nature has given—

"Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, an humbler Heaven."

As will be readily imagined, we had several rare and original characters in the company; men who had been rocked in their cradles to the tune, "Be-

gone dull care," and mistaking it for a command to themselves, had scrambled away in early youth and been wanderers all their days; men who led laughing lives; we see one of them now, a corpulent, good natured body, who delighted in the sobriquet of "*Colonel*" and loved good living; with a countenance rotund as the full moon and full as pleasant to look upon. Men who led singing lives; there was one, an Alleghany raftsman, who was accustomed to sing morning, noon and night, regardless of times and seasons, the following magnificent couplet:

> **"In Pennsylvania in the Spring,**
> **You'll hear the jolly raftsmen sing."**

Not a man in camp that could not honestly aver that it had a "Keystone" pitch to it. Then there was little "French" and his mule, or the mule and his little French, for which owned the other, was problematical; a firm for the manufacture of fun for the company, and sometimes raising the "ancient Henry" for their own private diversion. But of this original couple more anon. "Uncle Nick"—not the old Nick to whom we have just made respectful allusion—was a swarthy sinewy trader, fond of a rifle and a joke. In the latter particular he resembled the Colonel, but in all else his very antipodes. The latter *did* love good dinners—the tenderest and most savory pieces of a fat buffalo—say the tongue, a slice of the "fleece" or a marrow bone—lay very

near his heart, when he could obtain them, and much pleasure did he take in putting them as near that seat of the affections as he could get them. The former, on the contrary was a man that had lived out of doors all his life and inured to privation, could despatch a segment of raw liver with as much relish as he would discuss a piece of "best cavendish." This diversity in the *tastes* of these old jokers, sometimes led to amusing little scenes, universally enjoyed by the troop. One day, a fine buffalo cow was slaughtered, and her proportions were being rapidly discounted, when the Colonel who though not "in at the death," was "never late to dinner," came up puffing and blowing like a school of porpoises. He immediately made demonstrations towards a marrow bone, and having never read Lord Chesterfield, was an intolerable carver. He had but partially succeeded in playing Dr. Sweet—dislocation—upon the aforesaid bone, when Uncle Nick rode up and dismounted. The Colonel earnestly solicited his assistance, proposing to become his launderer, if he should bloody his clothes in the operation. The old trader smiled graciously as he took the knife, and parted the joint in a twinkling; so dexterously indeed, that the Colonel had opened his mouth to compliment him, when, thrusting the Colonel's knife into the meat that lay near, Uncle Nick mounted his long-eared steed, bone in hand, and galloped off, leaving the discomfited and heart-stricken

Colonel ,wiping the perspiration from his brow, and mutteringly consigning the old trader to the dominions of his illustrious namesake.

After this little domestic scene, we returned to the encampment near a fine spring of pure cold water. We had scarcely completed our preparations for supper, when a stranger approached, leading the frame of an ancient bay, that if he possessed no good points, could certainly boast of several sharp ones. Made up of angles, acute, right and obtuse, he reminded us of Dr. Syntax's famous steed. But his companion, was if possible more gaunt and emaciated than himself. Tall, bony, wild and haggard, his fingers attenuated and of deathly length, his eyes sunken, restless and glittering, curiosity and sympathy alternated in the mind of the beholder. Nearly famished, he ate voraciously. Questions could elicit little, save that he was called *Rolly Roebuck*—that he had followed us from Independence, seven hundred miles distant—that he had been but nine days on the way and had eaten nothing during his journey—that he was going to California, and a dozen other stories so wild, improbable and contradictory, as to awaken suspicion that he might be a spy from some lurking band of Indians. He was put under arrest, and the saddlebags that were thrown across his steed, were searched. They contained nothing but a scanty supply of clothing and a Texas soldier's patent for a league of land. He had evidently been

recently shaved, and yet no razor could be found, and we were at least four hundred miles from any settlement, in the midst of an Indian-haunted, wolf-howling wilderness. Conjecture was paralyzed; was he the perpetrator of some horrid crime, thus flying away from home and humanity. Had hideous spectres haunted his lonely way, and driven him apparently to the verge of insanity? Had that head of his ever been pillowed upon the bosom of affection? Had fingers of love and trust ever smoothed those tangled and sunburned locks? Were there indeed any in the wide world that bewailed his mysterious fate, and longed for his return, and shed tears to his memory? The mother that bore him—the sister that cherished him—perhaps the wife that had loved him—where were they all? Swept away by pestilence, scattered and blasted by some lightning-stroke of providence, was he indeed the last of his race—the Logan of his line, with none to weep and none to lament him? Who could tell? He accompanied us to Santa Fe; he returned with us to Independence, he went his way, and yet these questions remained unanswered, and Rolly Roebuck, the mysterious stranger of the plains, is all we know of this companion of our wanderings.

CHAPTER SIXTH

Pawnee Rock—Calf Hunting—Retailing Tricks upon Travelers—Waking the Sleepy Guard.

THE route to Santa Fe is not without its historical reminiscences, we had almost said, its classic associations. Pawnee Rock, lifts its lofty cliffs far above the beautiful plain that stretches away to the river, while some miniature lakes clear as the Heavens they mirror are glassed beneath. On its columns hewn out by the hand of Nature and of Time, many a traveler's name or initials are rudely carved, and even the Indians, infected with that "longing after immortality," have intermingled their strange devices—hieroglyphics after the manner of the Egyptians and equally intelligible. Tradition has enriched the spot with the story of a battle in times of old between the Osages and Pawnees—a battle which reminds one of Roman story, the Horatii and Curatii immortalized by Livy. Each tribe selected from its number one hundred warriors, who were to meet upon some spot known only to themselves, and there decide in mortal combat, the difficulties that had so long embroiled them in a lingering and inglorious warfare.

The red streamer that heralds the day was the sig-

nal for conflict, and the clouds of evening that blushed as if reflecting the red field of the dead, found the fight yet wavering, rising, sinking, rallying and advancing like a banner borne on in the midst of the battle. The Osages were about to triumph—the victory that should bury the hatchet for future generations, and weave into the songs of the wigwams a blood-dyed woof of golden story, was just achieved, when a party of Pawnees treacherous to the last, rushed from behind this rock, where they had been secreted, and every Osage bit the dust that night, while his scalp adorned the belts of the ignoble Pawnees. Five only of the two hundred who went forth that morning, returned to the dusky maidens that waited to welcome their lovers, and the death wail rose dismally upon the midnight air.

At the ponds, before mentioned, we found a company of fifteen hunters engaged in capturing Buffalo Calves, and a drove of one hundred domestic Cows. They had already taken forty-five Calves, one young Elk, and two Antelope. There for the first time, we witnessed the skill with which an American can handle the Lasso. Accompanying one of the hunters, we proceeded some distance to the low ground, beyond which upon a ridge, a small herd of Buffalo were quietly grazing. Ascending the hill within fifty yards of them, the hunter dashed on, passing several Calves, until he spied one that pleased him. Instantly reining his horse into "position," he swung

the lasso twice or thrice around his head to open the loop and gain motion, and in an instant it was flying sixty feet through the air, and with unerring accuracy fell over the head of the calf. Its mother, infuriated at the plaintive bleat, rushed from the herd, and came on toward the hunter with the speed of an avalanche. Again the horse wheeled as at the will of his rider—the rifle was brought up in an instant, and the mother fell a victim to the strong instinct of her nature, and tumbled headlong and lifeless, to the earth. Our abhorrence of this act almost of sacrilege, was for the moment forgotten in our admiration of the graceful and skilful manner in which the feat was performed; it was not the first time that success has been numbered among the virtues. The calf as if secure in the thought that the hunter could do it no greater wrong than he had already inflicted, followed him to the camp, quietly as a petted lamb.

The following day (June 3rd) we discovered at some distance from the road, a dead Buffalo. Speedily resolved into a Coroner's Jury, we repaired to the spot. We found him pierced with three Indian arrows, and *instanter,* like a bevy of damsels we were on the lookout for *bows.* Glances were cast in divers and sundry directions across the plain, and the old hunters decided that those interesting little projectiles or missiles (they were not always missills) with iron heads and shafts winged with three eagle

pinions, and grooves curiously cut the whole length of the arrows, so that the blood might have a nice little channel to flow in—admirable contrivance!—were once the property of that exemplary people, the Pawnees. The broad horizon was carefully swept with a glass, but without bringing anything more formidable than a stinted tree within its field, and we hurried to camp, the large premonitory drops already pattering down, by no means retarding our pace, though connected with the thought of darkness, Indians and a drenching, they were but very slightly promotive of our *peace*. First it rained, then showered, then poured, then came down all at once, stopped a moment to fill, then out came the bottom again! There was evidently a bad leak somewhere, and the pumps unmanned. But rain or interregnum, the guard must be stationed, and our Dutchman must go. His Sergeant as a slight testimonial of regard, placed him upon a commanding eminence, a quarter of a mile from camp, where he might enjoy those essentials to health, a free circulation of air, pure water and enough of it. "Is your gun loaded Hans?" asked the sergeant of him protectingly—"tam nation, yesh!" he growled, "tish loated mit five piggest kind of little puulets." "All right!" and our hero was left to his vigils. Twelve o'clock came; the guard were relieved, but the Dutchman had enlisted in the standing army during the war of the elements that raged around him, and was somehow

forgotten. Poor fellow! Well did he understand the *ruse,* but fear of being mistaken for an enemy prevented his reporting himself at head-quarters. At day-break, he ventured to arise from his lonely bivouac, blue as the blanket he tugged after him, which completely saturated was heavy as a green hide, and reported himself, with a visage nearly as long as the night, and doubtful whether to be grateful for the escape or indignant for the neglect, the two opposing sentiments played alkali, and a *soporific* state was the result.

A small business in the *retail* line, was transacted on the morning following this eventful night, and after this wise. Little French's "Jack" was unaccountably missing. His disconsolate master would not be comforted. "Jack's gone!" was the burden of his lament, and such a seriocomico look did he put on, that the expression and the tone were absolutely irresistible, and the laugh became so decidedly *general,* that it might for that matter have been *lieutenant,* salaried at the expense of the loser. *Le Noie,* for so his mother had called him, not a little annoyed at this extraordinary manifestation of sympathy, proceeded dolefully to deposit the saddle in a wagon, in preference to carrying it upon his own back, and had already addressed himself to a pedestrian pilgrimage, when some one exclaimed, "there, French, there's your mule!" and there he was to be sure, but such a change! Now it must be premised that Jack

was unable to do what Hamlet's ghostly companion declared *he* could, and for the best of reasons; he had no end in view, that would indorse such an extension of entailment. There he was switching a long and exceedingly graceful caudal appendage, that matched his ears most admirably. Fertilizing rains fall in those regions! 'Twas the work of a night; analagous to the famous vine, and quite as wonderful. To make a long tale short, as the saying is, some wag of a fellow had attached a Buffalo's tail to the poor donkey, and there he was quietly feeding, as though nothing like annexation had ever been contemplated. Little French fairly danced with joy, when the truth whisked into his mind—"ginger and scissors! look a' Jack!" His voice keyed up to the highest note of joy, startled the mule into a gallop, and tethered as he was an unannounced circus performance was the result. 'Round he went and round went his master, till finally catching at this novel specimen of grafting, the mule gave a desperate spring, off come the tail, up come the stake, down went French and away went the mule.

The little companies that cross the Western Plains, *en route* to Santa Fe, owe their safety rather to their eyes than their arms. "The art of seeing" is cultivated to perfection by the old hunters and traders, who pass the best part of their lives in regions, where might is synonymous with right, and alarm is equivalent to arm. Hence the strict military discipline to

which companies are subjected from their first organization. The Captain gives his signal to halt, when and where he thinks best, at night, and he startles the morning with the cry "catch up," regardless of the grumblings of the dilatory, or the breakfast but half eaten. His word is law, and a disregard of it, would ensure the delinquent a journey and a "mess" by himself, with no one to dictate his movements, or designate his encampment. Scouting parties are ever in the advance, and on either side of the main body, carefully scanning the low grounds, and beating up the ravines, not exactly for recruits, and at evening the guard is stationed about the wagons, and relieved at intervals of two hours, until the dawn of day. It was one of those tempestuous nights, when the elements seem to conspire for a grand rout, water, fire and frost strangely mingling in the forms of wind, rain, lightning and hail, with darkness that can be felt, and ever and anon, gleams of light to make it visible, while a pack of hungry wolves near by, fill the pauses of the storm with their wild and dismal minstrelsy. The return guard awoke us from our dreams of drowning under the lee of a wagon, that lazily dripped in the intervals of the storm, a sort of interlude to the performance. Any change was preferable to this scriptural emblem of a scolding woman, and shouldering our rifles we marched forth to our stations. The relieved guard huddled together be-

neath the wagons, muttering curses on the length of the nights, and the damp state of the atmosphere. No fire, no fuel, they made a dismal night of it. One of the guard amphibiously stretched himself upon the wet blanket, and was presently on strictly "fatigue duty," to wit, in a most delightful state of somnolency. Day was dawning, when the Sergeant discovered the delectable situation of the "sleepy guard." Calling to his aid some ten or twelve of the "b'hoys," who were ready for a frolic, he instructed them to wrap themselves in blankets *a la savage* and station themselves around their intended victim. There lay the guard extended upon the wet plain, nicely swathed in a wet blanket, and there stood a dozen scalp-loving savages ready at the signal, to give the "war whoop." The Sergeant withdrawing the sleeper's rifle from beneath his head, discharged it close to his ear and springing upon him, gave him a most fraternal clutch about the neck; at the instant, "there rose so wild a yell," from the twelve in waiting, that nothing less than an hundred Pawnees could have produced it. The fellow thus rudely roused, struggled, kicked, choked and shouted, "murder! help! fire! Indians! Devils! and down the bank they rolled, the sergeant and the guard, the yelling squad following hard after them. Upon reaching the bottom, the sergeant loosed his hold, and the fellows, gasping, a half loud, half whispered "Oh! God!" streaked it for the camp, followed by

as hearty a laugh as ever responded to a joke. It is almost needless to intimate that if our hero ever slept on guard again, it was with the precaution to keep at least one eye open, and on the lookout for a surprise.

CHAPTER SEVENTH

Crossing the Arkansas—Prairiedom—The Cimarron —Wild Horses—Horned Frogs—Indians.

N the morning of the fifth of June, it was deemed advisable to cross the Arkansas. This decision was somewhat hastened by the rising of the river, as delay would either compel us to wait till the waters should *run by*, or to make a little journey of three hundred miles up its north bank to the mountains. The river nearly a quarter of a mile in width was of various depths, twelve inches, five feet, very uncertain. Like a family of cranes, we passed two delightful hours in wading, before we selected a fording place, which was marked out by the teamsters' whips. The wagon-beds were then raised by blocking, preparatory to a launch—the banks on either side were cut down for the passage of the wagons—one party crossed with their rifles to protect the cavalcade, when it should reach the opposite bank, while another tarried to guard the remaining teams. After enjoying a melting time of it, we safely encamped on the Mexican side of the river, where our Captain, not having the fear of the Washingtonians before his eyes, very unexpectedly produced an ill-looking (viz: diminutive) jug of *"fourth proof,"*

which was proved for the fifth and last time, by the company, seated *a la* Turk, under the cool shade of a wagon cover, who like dutiful nephews as they were, made a personal application of the remainder in a health to "Uncle Sam." Altogether it was a spirited affair.

The morning found us on our way among the small hills, heaved like billows upon the borders of a plain desolate as the deep, without even a weed to drift before the blast. Our way now led over a plain, sixty miles without water. Every vessel that could be thus appropriated, was filled with the blessed element. The animals were driven to the river that they also might be supplied—"catch up" was the word, and away we trailed slowly and heavily over the sand hills, a sort of American Sahara to the hard, level ground, the Petrea of this wilderness.

Sixty miles without water! Not a brook to break the oppressive silence with its song—not a spring gushing up by some mossy rock—not a tree to catch the feverish breath of morning in its branches, a wave-offering to the passing spirit of the wind—not a shrub to break the painful monotony of the scene—not a place for a miracle! no rock which a prophet's touch could wake, as of old in the desert—not a mound to indicate the last resting of the dead, for even the dead were not there—the far horizon curved away in a circle unbroken as eternity. No living thing was there—insect nor beast nor bird,

the fable of the Sea of Sodom was realized—vegetation but lingered on the sod—the great seal of loneliness was set upon the spot—a miniature world, a world without water, and without life! Here we were, a little train creeping like a living nerve across this solemn disc of wilderness. We traveled until midnight, halted, and soon our little republic were silently sleeping. But who can trace the flight of winged thoughts, that true as "doves let loose in eastern skies," swept on viewless wings to the heaven of home—on how many ears fell the cradle-song of childhood; how many heard the fond tones of sister or sweetheart or wife. Then away to California and Mexico and the Halls of the Montezumas—delving in the gold mines or climbing the mountains; cataracts, cascades and streams that flashed and murmured in our dreams, and voices that sang with sweetest cadence "And to pure cold water we come." Oh! dream-land is the very Canaan of the weary and the suffering.

Meanwhile the wind freshened; breeze, gale and hurricane followed each other in rapid succession; the dreams of the sleepers were for a moment disturbed, as they drew blankets more closely around them and relapsed into that oblivious state, which they that toil, alone know how to prize. That everlasting "catch up" again disturbed our repose, and we awoke to the conscious that seven of our number were missing—seven individual hats had suddenly

taken to themselves wings and left us in the flurry. Just the loss of half a dozen old and unfashionable hats may not be deemed note-worthy by gentlemen who sport their beavers in Broadway, but there is nothing especially delightful in traveling a thousand miles or so, bareheaded. At sunset, we were yet upon the desert; the supply of water was exhausted; the oxen and the mules began to fail; one team after another was turned loose, their places being supplied from the number of supernumerary animals, of which we had sixty. On we kept through the darkness; there was but one thought throughout the company, and that was of water. Everything else was of minor consideration. What if one after another did give up the mule he had been riding, to be placed in the teams, while the late equestrian (?) trudged along on foot? What if a hunter did step fairly and squarely upon a bunch of prickly pears with his moccasin-cased foot, and having done this, did sit down leisurely and resignedly exactly, upon another larger and more "fretful" bunch, to extract the thorns that rankled in his poor foot? These were calamities of little moment, scarcely heeded. The poets say that "Hope the charmer lingered still behind," a statement highly probable, for her ladyship must have lingered behind our cavalcade, very far indeed. The eternal sameness of the way presented no landmark by which we could judge of distance—no skirting forest, no towering

hill, no winding stream, but all blind and pathless as a starless heaven. The animals that had been freed from the harness, now moved slowly past the wagons, their parched tongues protruded their full length, while their husky breathing at every faltering step, betokened their suffering. On we went until the animals apparently quickened with new life, snuffed the breeze and moved briskly forward. The thirsty, dismal low of the oxen ceased, and human reason became for the thousandth time, a willing pupil of animal instinct. Water was indeed near, and at two o'clock in the morning, we reached Sand Creek, into which the beasts all harnessed and yoked as they were, rushed headlong. There was not a man of us all (to say nothing of the musical talent of our animals, whether or not it was at all commensurate with their ears) who could not have sung with a right good will, "Cold water for me—cold water for me."

Tarrying here until afternoon, we again took up our line of march over high ground to the far famed and feared Cimarron. This river flows through the celebrated hunting ground of the Indians, for here Buffalo resort in countless multitudes for water. Its banks are composed of sand hills like little billows, that extend on either hand to the desert. These hillocks are covered with briars, and sometimes surmounted with clusters of plum bushes. The atmosphere in this region possesses no humidity. Every

article of wood, wagon wheels and even the rifle stocks are shrunk by its influence, and even humanity itself is effected by it, if the appearance of some of the company may be taken as evidence, for they certainly *looked* rather small. Through this enchanted—not enchanting—region flows the enchanted river Cimarron. Rising in the mountains, it rolls on to mingle with the waters of the Arkansas, within a channel averaging eighty feet in width and from two to three feet in depth. In the morning perhaps, the stream may entirely disappear, leaving in its place a dry bed of sand. Wondering at the phenomenon, you wrap your blanket about you, and dream of genii, gnomes and naiads, and awaking, lo! a deep and rapid river is again flowing. The prints of the moccasin were yet plain upon the sand, and who might be secreted among the sand hills, was to us no very agreeable speculation.

On the following day, we left this land of wonders to avoid the sand, and were obliged to camp without water, as it is extremely bad traveling among the hills at night, besides that exorbitant tolls are sometimes levied by the red proprietors of this route. Here we were completely surrounded with Buffalo; a great mass meeting, they just parted to let our little cavalcade pass through, and then closed up behind us. A troop of wild horses came snorting and prancing about the camp free and wild as the steed of Mazeppa. Shade of St. Patrick! Horned

frogs, anomalous things of a light gray color, with the perceptive faculties largely developed, "and what a length of tail behind," creep about on all fours, beauties of rather a dubious character. Why they call lizards frogs is more than our limited knowledge of Natural History enables us to explain. Little French expressed himself most decidedly: "dey be no good for de soup, like de grond jump frog—de frog with no one leetle tail," and we acquiesced in the opinion, at least the first clause.

On the 12th of June, we moved up the river Cimarron. The Buffalo had disappeared, a sure indication that Indians were in the vicinity. Of this we had already been forewarned, and sweeping the horizon with the glass we discovered a large body of them on a point of rocks about three miles ahead. Believing them to be Comanches, preparations were immediately made to give them a hospitable reception. As the Captain was in the advance, we were all suddenly promoted, and orders were issued on all sides. Cleaning rifles, cutting patches, filling powder horns, forming wagons, men ordered in front, and thus in martial array, we moved on within a mile of the enemy, and awaited the wagons. Meanwhile the Indians were cutting all sorts of capers, and six of their number dashed out from the the main body and rapidly approached. One of them bore a flag of truce upon a small sword, but as Indians sometimes resort to these little devices

for rhetorical effect, we kept our eyes upon the main body and stood still. On they came at full gallop, their horses covered with foam, and charging through our line like a troop of dragoons, reined up in the rear, frightening our long-eared gentry prodigiously.

Having ascertained through an Indian interpreter which was our Captain, the head chief instantly saluted him in a manner decidedly fraternal; said they were Arapahoes (a branch of the Shians) and gracefully pointing his sword to the hill beyond, added that eight hundred of his braves were dying to see their relatives the "palefaces." Although in truth, little disposed to "see company," yet after much consultation it was deemed impracticable to say "not at home" to those who had so kindly sent word, lest they might send something else, that would need no interpreter. Moreover we were in the neighborhood of the Comanches, a doubtful race at best, and it was thought advisable to place implicit confidence in the Arapahoes, if perchance they might reciprocate it and become in case of difficulty faithful allies. The true philosophy in making friends is to be ourselves friendly; distrust and doubt never promoted good faith in the breast of another; the sentiments are sympathetic, which is another name for mental contagion. One may be abused into hating, but he can only be lured into loving. Our Captain therefore replied that we would be glad to see his braves, have

a "talk," and smoke the calumet, intending meanwhile to camp before their arrival, thus bringing up the rear of our affection with a detachment of wagons properly disposed for defence. There is many a curious secret pertaining to others that men discover by rummaging the recesses of their own hearts. Scarcely had "Houck" concluded his friendly words when at a signal from the chief, the whole cavalcade of eight hundred came rushing down in a cloud of dust that rolled up like the smoke after the discharge of a dozen pieces of artillery. On they came as Mr. Gilpin went to dinner, and poured around our wagons in such numbers that we were compelled to halt. In this dilemma, our Captain ordered the chief to form his men at fifty yards distant, in order to give us room to camp. The order was immediately obeyed in as good style as could have been done by well-disciplined troops. The Indians now claimed the privilege of selecting a camping ground, and led the way to the river's bank, and pronounced a spot strewn with half-picked bones and already peopled with whole colonies of buzzards and ravens, a proper place for the encampment of brave men; because here, three days before, they had met our common enemy, the Pawnees and killed seventy-six of their number, with the loss of only six of their own warriors. It was a horrid place for a lodging, and anything but the fragrance of flowers saluted our olfactories; but we

dare not refuse the "honor" that our red friends were bestowing, although it must be confessed that "it smelled to Heaven."

Forming the wagons, kindling fires and preparing for supper soon occupied the whole party. A tent having been constructed of a wagon cover, the chiefs were invited to abide with us. After dispatching messengers to their camp for Squaws and Buffalo tongues, they seated themselves in a circle upon the ground, and commenced unrolling a bundle of skins. One fold after another was removed, until a beautiful *"Peace Pipe"* was disclosed to view. It was a splendid thing, two feet in length, the bowl and hatchet of solid silver, and the stem of ebony, inlaid with silver curiously wrought in all manner of strange devices. This pipe having been filled and lighted was passed round, each one taking a whiff or two with a gravity becoming so important and substantial a ceremony. This done, we inquired with much apparent indifference for our Comanche friends, and expressed some concern that they were not with us. Our new found allies stated that the Comanche camp was about fifteen miles distant; that they were enemies; that they had proposed to them a coalition for the purpose of cutting off our party. According to the account of our informants, they made a very noble and valiant reply, saying that the "pale faces" were their friends and brothers, and that if the Comanches wished to *fight,* they

were ready to do battle, and to do *them* for that matter. For these welcome assurances we gave them a keg of tobacco, for which as a *quid pro quo*, they desired us to select its value in horses, which offer we of course declined.

At sunset, the Indians, with the exception of the chiefs returned to their village, after which as a tonic to their amicable resolutions, we placed a double guard and enjoined double vigilance. The chiefs were assembled in the tent provided for them, and one of our number was placed directly in front of it with a large Chesapeake Duck gun, for the fraternal purpose of *defending* them, with directions, upon the first intimation of an attack, to discharge both barrels in the direction of the movement, even if it should be in the tent itself.

The night passed away quietly, and at day, the Indians were again among us tricked out to the last touch of a Prairie toilet, and mounted on horses. The rascals had taken the scalps of the hapless Pawnees and lined them very tastefully with red cloth, and having neatly combed the long hair, had suspended them by a buckskin thong from the bridle bits. The effect of this little arrangement was admirable! These Indians looked bright as new copper from the best Lake Superior mine, 89 per cent, and are of more than ordinary stature. Wrapped in buffalo robes secured at the waist by a belt, buckskin leggins and moccasins wrought with the quills of

the porcupine, a headdress of three eagle feathers, a quiver of arrows swung over the shoulder Apollo-like, a bow or a lance in the hand, and mounted upon their well-trained and fleet mustangs, they roam over the Prairies from the Arkansas to the mountains, and are everywhere and always at home. The squaws greatly affect a dishabille—a buckskin wrapper showily fringed and loosely thrown over the shoulders, without bustle or flounce constituting the gala-day and ordinary apparel of the Arapahoes ladies. Wampum beads, and the gray wolf's claws ingeniously prepared and strung, swing from their ears and noses *a la mode,* give the finishing touch to these native beauties.

The bow which is the chief weapon in the hands of these Indians, is short, flat, made of wood and raw hide, neatly wound with sinew and tufted with colored horsehair—sometimes red—fastened at either end. This weapon they use with wonderful dexterity and effect, throwing twenty arrows in a minute, with accuracy almost unerring and with such force as often to transfix a Buffalo. Their shields are made of the dried hide from the neck of the Buffalo, and covered with a piece of white buck-skin neatly fringed. It is about two feet in length, oval and on the innner and concave side, a loop is attached, through which the arm is thrust, leaving the hand free for the bow and bridle rein. The swift-winged arrows glance from these shields like hail

from a slated roof, even turning a rifle ball unless struck near the centre. A lance completes the armor of these modern Greeks. The bow, the shield, and the lance are all classic weapons of war, sung by Homer, which is more than can be said of the "peace-makers" and "revolvers" of civilized and christian lands. When these Indians go forth to conquest, they ride one horse and lead another for the charge, which is their favorite, and it must be allowed, imposing mode of attack. For every deed of noble prowess, a warrior is permitted to amputate one joint of a finger. Many of them had entirely disposed of one finger, and had commenced *manufacturing* the second—rather a handsome mode of distinguishing bravery, to be sure. Should any one enact the craven, he is left at home to dress Buffalo skins with the squaws; and one fat, funny and forty looking fellow, we could not help noticing with a smile, whose fingers were all "on hand," and whose phrenological developments indicated a lover of bottles rather than battles; there was a twinkle in his small eye embedded in adipose matter, that betokened *something*, but it was by no means the outgleaming of anything nearer martial than marital. In a word, he would have made a good butler in the time of the Pharaohs, so well did he love—good living.

The customs, costume and weapons of this people, as well as their manner of attack constantly remind one of the warriors of olden story. Bravery is still a

virtue, and the result of an enterprise at once determines its character; imperfect likeness of those that "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle" so loved to sing, they wander free and indomitable as the winds upon our Western Prairies.

CHAPTER EIGHTH

Two dishes of Buffalo—Shot and Lanced, with a dessert of Mustang.

THE great attraction of a trip to Santa Fe, save to professional traders and trappers, is the Buffalo hunt. Let them prate of the fox, the deer and the steeple chase as they will—exhaust the whole catalogue of fashionable field sports—leaping five-barred gates and ten feet ditches, running hares out of breath and out of life, but they never felt the excitement of a Buffalo hunt upon the unfurrowed, unfenced, and unmeasured plains of God's own grading. They never saw the countless multitudes of these shaggy monarchs of the Prairie thundering along like the waves of a dark and stormy river or wheeling like a battalion into line. Away, far as the eye can reach, on they crowd, struggling, whirling in eddies of muscular and tumbling life, disappearing in clouds of dust, only to reappear in darker and denser column. Upon a well trained horse, with a good rifle in hand, to follow *such* game, to single some giant leader from the herd, to calculate distances bearings and motions, to speed the bullet to its lodgment in a vital part, while your good steed is flying like a courser over the plain, to be on the alert for

an attack, to wheel away at the approach of the infuriated animal—to allow him barely space to rush by you, and then to return upon him ere he can stay his tumbling course—this is to be a sportsman on the Western Prairies, requiring the horsemanship of an Arab, the address of a warrior and the skill of a "dead shot."

Antoine, for so a swarthy little Mexican who has been hitherto a silent partner in the multitudinous firm of "we," was called, was a splendid rider and a perfect whaleman with a lance. He could make an incision with that instrument in the vital part of some Buffalo under full motion, that all the threads, needles and plasters of the medical faculty, could not heal. Now a lance is no delicate affair, a huge two-edged, rounded blade of steel, nearly two feet in length, and inserted into an ashen shaft of some ten feet or more. Altogether an awkward thing to run against. In the use of this little article, Antoine was decidedly skilful, and being withal, somewhat of an egotist, he needed but a wink, or at most, a word, to recount some achievement, in which he was everywhere and always the hero. Scores of Buffalo tongues had enriched his saddle-bow, the trophies of a single hunt; and indeed to hear the volubility with which he conversed, one would think him the last man who need go abroad for tongues; or at least, that having already eaten them by scores, the old saying, "a part strengthens a part," had proved true in his

case, and that they had all set in and lent unwonted energy and endurance to his own individual "unruly member." However this might have been, his messmates frequently availed themselves of this loquacious trait, especially when the dinner was rather meagre—say a single rabbit that had raced itself to a shadow, and a rock bass or two for five half-starved, ablebodied hunters—and poor Antoine, forgetful of the creature comforts that were rapidly disappearing around him, would suspend operations, lay his bowie knife upon the grass and tell where and when and how, and all about it, with a particularity that defied an interrogation point to pay its addresses to any point in the narrative, his crafty companions meanwhile, making a clean sweep of the dinner.

One day the company had encamped at the Lower Spring, on the Cimarron river, and were dining

HUNTING BUFFALO ON THE CIMARRON

upon the hump of a fine Buffalo that Antoine had just killed when the question arose as to the comparative merits of the lance and the rifle. The Mexican contrary to his usual custom, remained silent until some self-sufficient Yankee roundly asserted that he could bring in more tongues in one day, with the aid of his rifle, than a dozen lancing Mexicans could do in a month's time. This was running atilt against Antoine, and was more than a lance to him. "Carajo! Skulking about ravines for deer within rifle shot of a civilized huddle is no place for lancers." Had you been a California *Buccarara,* as I have, my boy, you wouldn't speak so contemptuously of the lance." "Words—words" exclaimed the advocate of rifles, "I'll lay you a wager that I can shoot more Buffalo any day than you can phlebotomize in two —what say you, Antoine?" "My horses the forfeit, and the time now" returned the Mexican, thoroughly aroused. "Done!"—"Done," and the delicious hump ceased to suffer as the hunters prepared themselves for the trial.

Antoine had two excellent horses, well-trained and fleet. Having girted a strip of sheepskin upon his bay, and divested himself of everything but pantaloons and shirt, he twisted a red handkerchief about his head, and leaping lightly into his seat, lance in hand, he struck the rowels into the sides of his steed, and was off at a killing rate in an instant. A herd of Buffalo was quietly feeding within a half mile of

the camp, and away dashed the Mexican into the midst of it. The Buffalo scattered hither and thither, and the tramp of feet raised such a cloud upon the dusty plain as to conceal at intervals the hunter and the hunted. The rifleman, meanwhile was making the best of his way on a slow-paced mule toward a group of fifteen or twenty, that were standing knee-deep in the bend of the river, like the Dairy animals of some old cheese-making Cyclops. This was the Yankee's only hope, for Antoine had raised such a rout in the herd, upon his fleet courser, that a mule could scarcely "follow in the footsteps of its illustrious predecessor." The very landscape seemed now endowed with life and motion. All the men who were not on scouting duty were scattered out at various distances, and at the topmost speed of each individual mule. The red turban of Antoine appeared here and there through the dusty clouds in the midst of the whirling and thundering herd, like some red meteor. Dashing along side of a huge bull that was lumbering off like a maddened elephant, Antoine, who carried the lance on his right hip, holding it there with the pressure of his elbow, the point nearly touching the ground, suddenly drew himself back, lifted the steel to a horizontal and with a tremendous charge, plunged it full two feet into the Buffalo's side—turned it once round—disengaged it and on he went into the very midst of the frightened band. The huge animal, gave a frantic toss of his head, a

plunge or two and pitched headlong in the dust. Another and another shared the same fate. Oh! it was a sight worth going there to see! Turn your eyes now to the flying drove. Mark the quick cross current of the rushing tide. There! A fine cow clears herself from the crowd, and Antoine's red turban rising and falling with the motion of his horse in the thickest of the troop. Look! Out he comes now right gallantly into full view, his horse covered with dust and flecked with foam, and urged to the top of his bent—the rider bearing his lance atilt, his eye upon the fugitive and his soul in his eye, his body a little inclined forward, rides like a bird on a driven and foamy billow. How nobly the Buffalo widens the space between herself and her pursuer—just now side by side—twenty feet— fifty feet—an hundred feet—bravely done! See the rowels play! Give me the glass. The blood trickles in a little ruddy stream from the horse's sides. Nearer, nearer, he gains, he laps—he heads! No, no not quite— now's his time! See! The bridle rein flies loose upon the courser's neck; he brings up the lance from its rest—grasps it with both hands—poises it at full arms-length above his head—There! He plunges the rowels into his horse's sides again to bring him up —now—now—he has thrown himself forward on the neck of his horse; the lance flashes like lightning—it tells—see the cow strike out again—the lance is buried in the hollow below her hips. What a

plunge! He has lost his blade! It clings in the wound. Poor Antoine; his horse is exhausted and he reins up—there he sits like Apollo with his broken bow, the harmless shaft alone remaining in his hands. On bounds the Buffalo, on, on, away, away—how rapidly she diminishes—a black mote she now seems, flying along on the very verge of vision—she's gone —Buffalo, lance and all—but where's Antoine? There he goes leisurely along; he dismounts; he is cutting the tongues from the three animals he has killed. He vaults to his seat again, quickens his pace and rejoins the company. "Well Antoine?" Never a word did he say, but getting a new lance, mounts his favorite "roan" and is soon out of sight in full chase of another band. He returned at night completely exhausted, ten tongues hanging from his saddlebow.

Meanwhile the "Major" as the hunter was familiarly called, who was death on rifles, was by no means idle. Approaching the group that were quietly bathing their feet in the river and ruminating as they that divide the hoof are wont to do, he gently slipped from the mule he rode and hid himself behind the bank. "Two to one on the *Maje*" shouted one of the boys as our hero disappeared—"Crack" went the rifle and one of the Buffalo tumbled heels over head in a twinkling. The rest of the herd made off with the exception of one more philosophical than "the million," that stood stock still, doubtless pondering

the probable cause of this very indecorous movement on the part of his companion, when another report put a period to his cogitations, and with the rapidity of a posture-master, this pasture-master changed his attitude and curving his surly head seemed to bid defiance to all graceless interruptions of his meditations, but alas! for him another shot sent the noble brute reeling to the earth. Presently the "Major" emerged from his concealment and approached knife in hand, deliberately fanning himself with his broad-brimmed hat. Like one in doubt whether he should or not, the rifleman approached with cautious and distrustful step, and not till he had traversed three quadrants of a considerable circle, did he venture nearer to his fallen victim. There was a certain wild green glare in the creature's eyes decidedly suspicious to say the least of it, and rather too much of "speculation" to warrant a laying hold of either horn. It was a dilemma to be sure, and the Major marching directly up, thrust his hat suddenly into the face of the Buffalo, accompanying this act of courtesy with an emphatic *booh!* when the insulted animal springing to his feet gave chase to the rascal who thus dared to disturb his dying moments upon his own native plains. Legs were in great demand, and our quondam hero played drummer in a prodigious tattoo over the sward. On plunged the infuriated animal, in his turn assailant, till nature ceased to struggle and he fell dead almost at the

feet of his retreating foe. But the "Maje" stopped not—on he came like a scud, faster and faster, till venturing a glance over his shoulder, to see which would win in this amateur race, he brought up, and giving a hitch to his waistbands with a sort of lee lurch, took a fresh quid of the "honey dew," and retraced his steps to secure the tongues of the fallen, as their owners could not possibly have any further use for them.

Meanwhile the channel of the Cimarron, now partially dry, was one dark and moving mass of Buffalo for the distance of three miles, slowly approaching the bend of the river near which the hunters had stationed themselves. Secreted behind a projecting point, the Major's rifle again began to talk in the shrill, sharp monosyllables peculiar to that instrument. Crack—crack, crack went the rifle, until the bellow of the enraged beasts as they snuffed the blood of their dead, growing deeper and louder, absolutely silenced its emphatic notes. A perfect *feu de joie* did he keep up, while civil war seemed to rage among the surly leaders in this moving mass of life, whose matted heads came in contact with triphammer rapidity and power. The main portion of the drove in solid column a mile in length were crowding on behind; already many of the herd had been forced past the point in full view of the hunters; it was a fearful, almost a sublime spectacle—"There is a tide in the affairs of" Buffalo as well as "men,"

and this the hunters knew too well, for should *that* tide be turned upon them, no human power could save them from being trampled and crushed to death beneath the feet of the hurrying, bellowing, infuriated thousands. At this moment of thrilling interest to our little band, we sprang upon the top of the bank and shouted in a manner that would "split the ears of the groundlings," and no "orator of the day" was ever saluted with such a whirling of broadbrimmed hats and uproarous acclamations, since the philological discrepancies at Babel. The play took but slowly at first, but we had reason to thank Heaven that it took at all. Gradually the leaders turned, and the wake of life with them, and away they poured like no mimic thunder to the distant plains. Sunset found us all safe in camp and the *Maje* with *thirteen* tongues beside his own, as trophies of the day's toil and peril. The Mexican deporting himself like a philosopher and a Christian, "gave honor to whom honor was due," and a merry time we all had of it. Round the camp-fires we "fought the battles o'er" and smoked our pipes. Conversation ceased with the last whiff; one after another "turned in," and thus ended a day with the Buffalo in Prairiedom.

On the following morning, while preparing a breakfast of Buffalo tongue and rich slices of beef that an epicure might envy a wild horse came neighing, prancing and curveting among our sober

animals, near the camp. The Indian chiefs of whom we had so kindly taken care, Chesapeake Duck gun in hand, as before mentioned, were on the alert as well as two Spaniards who bore us company. One of the latter speedily saddled a horse and attaching one extremity of a lasso to the bow, and secreted himself as he best could, as he might for any interference *we* should ever offer, between the horse's fore legs. From this singular observatory, he watched the motions of the stranger and we watched him. The wild horse, a noble, war-like looking animal with a mane and foretop that would have shamed a modern, soap-lock Exquisite, came round with a step light and springing as a fawn's, yet firm and muscular as a charger's, snuffing distrustfully, and tossing the long glossy foretop from his eyes. There was poetry in his every motion. Shy at first, he would approach within a few rods of the Spaniard, stop, wheel as though he had practiced the evolution from colthood, and bound away for a quarter of a mile, whirl again and utter a wild shrill neigh which tingled on the ear like the note of a clarion. Again he approached and retreated, until emboldened by the silence, he came within reach of the lasso, when quick as thought, the loop encircled his neck. With a snort and a bound he wheeled, but the tether was tough and checked his flight. The sudden tension however, parted the lasso and brought both horses upon their haunches. Instantly

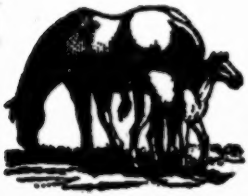
recovering himself, the Mustang was just bounding away, with the tether in trail, when the Spaniard sprang forward and seizing the end drew it round his body and threw himself upon the ground.

Then commenced a display of ground tumbling that was never witnessed at Astley's. For forty rods did this novel turnout keep under full motion, when the now thoroughly affrighted creature choked to the ground. Instanter, both Spaniards were upon him; one embracing him about the neck with a Bruin-like hug, and the other tying his fore legs and fastening a thong around his jaw—the first touch of the degrading bit. Another lasso was then thrown over his head to which we held fast like sailors hauling a line, and the captive was allowed to rise. One of his daring captors finally succeeded in placing a saddle upon his back hitherto guiltless of a rider, and springing into the saddle, the thong was sundered and away he bounded, like Mazeppa's steed,

> **"And sped like meteor through the sky,**
> **When with its crackling sound the night**
> **Is chequered with the Northern light—**
> **Town—village—none were on his track**
> **But the wide plain—"**

but here the parallel ceases. A spirit of wild adventure, and the love of gain impelled our equestrian to this deed of poetic daring. On plunged the terrified horse for more than a mile. Then stopping, he

reared, plunged and made every effort to rid himself of the incumbrance, but a *rider* was upon his back, and rowels in his sides. He fell, but the lash soon brought him to his feet—again he struggled and sank, and again the spur quickened him to new and unavailing effort. Thus his proud spirit was broken, and in twelve hours, the beautiful mustang beneath whose flying feet no grass had ever grown, the creature that never knew a master, was following the caravan like a doomed and slavish thing, a companion of stupid mules and the drudge of heartless man. We never felt till that moment the full expressiveness and force of that thoughtlessly repeated phrase, "to break a horse"—it is a crushing of the spirit, which in any brute is fearful to contemplate, but especially so when the victim is one of the most noble and beautiful and generous that Omnipotence ever fashioned, of all the myriads of beings whose "spirit goeth down to the dust."



CHAPTER NINTH

An Accident—Parting with Friends—Trouble—Waking the Wrong Passenger—First Glimpse of the Mountain Peaks.

HE cry "catch up" resounded through the camp, and the long line of wagons, mules and men was just ready to move, when the Indian Interpreter having received permission to ride in one of the Captain's wagons, carelessly displaced a rifle that lay upon the seat. Down went the gun and off went the bullet through the side of the wagon, the calf of an Indian's leg and the hoof of a mule. This eccentric flight caused no little confusion and alarm, the Spaniard swore and drew a stiletto, the Indian moaned and drew a bow, the mule snorted and "drew a foot," executing a sort of aerial *pirouette* with the wounded member. The Spaniard thought an Indian had shot him; the Indian fancied a hunter had wounded him, and the mule showed a decided disposition to foot the account with the whole company. Vengeance was already glittering in many a dark eye, when the order quick and stern, "boys! your rifles—be ready" put every man on the alert, while "leave camp—fifty paces" was speedily obeyed by the Indians. An explanation followed which re-

stored harmony and tested the sincerity of our red friends. After this "renewal of love" we proceeded to the village of the Arapahoes situated in the bend of the river. There upon a beautiful flat, two hundred and thirty conical dwellings were clustered, a mass meeting of magnified beehives. Poles twenty feet in length are placed in the ground, bound together at the top with thong, covered with Buffalo robes and over all another thickness of the same material elegantly dressed, whitened and rendered impervious to water. Within, the floor of each lodge was carpeted with Buffalo robes, here and there piled up to the number of ten, forming a lounge by day and a couch by night. In the centre a small space is left uncovered for a fire place. Interspersed among the lodges were poles fastened at the top, forming a tripod, upon which shields, leggins, moccasins and bows were hung. The poor squaws are the tanners and curriers of the city, and display no little skill in dressing and ornamenting these robes, wrought sometimes with porcupine quills, the *sine qua non* of Indian adorning, or gaily colored and trimmed with red cloth. In one tent we found a warrior who had been wounded by some rascally Pawnee in the recent skirmish. He was in great pain and the Indian's power of endurance alone accounted for his so long surviving. Our doctor—we had a disciple of Aesculapius in the troop—dressed his wound, and before we left, the pain was so much alleviated, that

he seemed in a fair way to recover. Nothing could exceed the gratitude of the poor fellow for this timely service; he offered horses and everything he most valued to his benefactor, and we left him with the blessing of an Indian upon our heads, and who shall presume to say that it was worthless? Nay more, that it did not exceed in sincerity and soul, the smiling protestations of the parlor and the drawing-room? The interests and the polish of civilized life sadly impair the memory of kindness, but an Indian forgets not his friends, though he never forgives his enemies. That crime against which the ancients had no law—the crime of ingratitude, not only because so heinous but also because so rare, could scarcely have one now, for want of legislators to enact it. On the bank of the river some twenty or thirty little urchins, guiltless of the fig-leaf as a Grecian statue, were holding pow-wow over a huge turtle they had captured and were bombarding with little reed arrows whenever he ventured to put forth a foot. Not long after we saw the creature comfortably roasting before one of their fires without undressing. It is a rough school in which these germs of a future race receive their training, but at least, it has the one merit of being appropriate to the wild life they are destined to lead. These Indians owned twelve hundred mules and two thousand horses; they have the best that the prairie and the stream afford; their dwellings are palaces to many a spot call-

ed home, that disgraces the towns of "the pale faces;" the wampum never depreciates; the "Administration" never does wrong, and in all, save the pantaloon and the pride and the pretence of civilization, they are almost an enviable people. With them "the morrow takes thought for the things of itself—sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." But never fear, we neither donned the blanket nor drew the sculping knife, for there *were* some things in the land we had left behind us, that made a prisoner of the heart and a treasure-house of memory.

But a caravan tarries not to philosophize or to speculate, and on we went as rapidly as the oppressive heat and the sandy way would permit. As for the sand, there was enough for an age-glass for old Time, and heat enough for the manufacture of the glass in the first place. Crossing the winding and magic Cimarron, we encamped among broken hillocks, tinged with the red ochre that had been washed from the higher lands in the vicinity, impregnated with iron. Here among the great rouge dishes of the Prairie *toilette* we encamped, whence we caught occasional—glimpses of Indians darting like spectres across the ravines, and furnishing us a theme for delightful meditation and dreams—"dissolving views" of the Comanches. Give us Catlin's sketches instead! Setting a double watch, we passed the night, momentarily expecting a visit from our unscrupulous neighbors, while a mist like a wet

blanket which Nature kindly wrapped about us, rendered our situation truly lugubrious—could we have found a more awkward word, we should most certainly have employed it. But the rain, if it spoiled our powder, also relaxed the sinews of their bows, and we were "quits" on the score of the wetting.

Came at last! What? Indians! Oh no—the morning and again we were on the way over ground that had been very badly ploughed if indeed an earthquake had not been cradled there some day, or a youthful volcano indulged in a little innocent recreation. Here and there a cluster of gooseberry or currant bushes or a stinted cedar growing in the rocky clefts that roughened our way, while away toward the setting sun, the hazy veil of the highlands was suspended, gathering dim as we advanced. In the midst of this desolation, our Indian friends left us. The regret was mutual and sincere. In the hour of danger they had proffered us their protection. Sundry knives and trinkets changed hands, and a feeling of loneliness stole over us when our eight hundred powerful allies, wheeled away and left us to wander on in the solitude. They watched us till we were lost in the distance, and we saw them no more. The interpreter was the last to leave us, although it was not "all for love" as the sequel presently made manifest; for after sundry efforts to overcome his modesty, he so far succeeded as to beg a piece of coarse calico which had fluttered in dust and dripped

with rain for a thousand miles or more in the capacity of a curtain. The coveted article was speedily transferred to his possession; whereupon he put spurs to his horse and bounded away as though his Satanic majesty had furthered his journey by at least a leg's length. On he went, the rag streaming a yard or more behind him, and yelling the excruciating satisfaction he undoubtedly felt. Poor child of Nature! His happiness is in his hand, and ere six hours the strip of figured delight will flaunt from the neck of some dusky maiden.

Once more alone in the enemy's country, nothing but implicit confidence in our Captain and perfect obedience to every injunction, could save us from being swept away by the merciless hordes that flitted ever and anon like visions of evil athwart our path. Houck was a man of great decision, remarkable courage, presence of mind, and much experience. He saw no daggers in the empty air, but infused throughout the majority of the company, a healthful tone of self-reliance, and a disposition to be one in spirit and in action. But there were a few turbulent characters so tenacious of their independence, as to be filled with apparent horror at the bare idea of being *commanded* by any one. Freed from the restraints of law and the impositions of social life, which had hitherto kept them crouching like cornered wolves, they now, like their quadrupedal kindred of the plains, threw up their heads and howled

defiance. At the slightest provocation, the bowie knife glitters in air, or the "villainous saltpetre" is ignited. The rough aphorism of Uncle Nick is often exemplified, "if a man has any dog blood in him, he is sure to bark on the road." The privation and the toil of the Santa Fe trail do indeed put human nature upon its best mettle; and we may safely aver that one who should prove a pleasant companion across the plains, could not be otherwise than a delightful partner in the journey of life. The Santa Fe trail—what a place for courtship! But to our "independents." The threatened division in our company had its origin in the decision of the Captain to admit the Indians among us as traveling companions, and that decision, as the result proved was judicious. One of the disaffected indulged in severe animadversion upon the capability of Houck to conduct the expedition, but as we were then in the midst of the Indians, no notice was taken of it. But now, apparent danger being past, the Captain called the company together and formally resigned the command, which indeed he did not at the first assume, but only rendered obedience to the urgent voice of the majority. It was no *sinecure,* but an office of unremitting responsibility, demanding the constant and often painful exercise of decision, judgment and sleepless vigilance. He expressed his determination to proceed with his own wagons, eight in number, adding that if any chose to travel with

him, they were welcome to share his counsel and guidance to the end of the route. Suiting the action to the word, he started off, all but four, the property of the hyper-republican gentleman, following hard after. The disaffected four took care to come up also, in time to take their place in the Corral, "and no questions asked," proving the truth of the poet's line,

> **"God never made an independent man,**
> **'Twould mar the concord of his gen'ral plan."**

One day as we were traveling leisurely along, harmonious as a pair in the "first quarter," one of the boys—hunters are all boys, though they are as gray as rats—discovered some animal just as it was showing a light pair of heels in its retreat to subterranean apartments. "A porcupine! a porcupine!" "At him boys—out with him!" Spades, picks and even paws were speedily put in requisition. Little French was prince of diggers, and wrought away like a badger. Our attention at this moment was diverted by the appearance of some Antelope, and after an unsuccessful chase of a couple of hours—we chased the Antelope and not the hours—we returned to camp regretting the rare sport of which our Quixotic expedition had undoubtedly deprived us. The porcupine hunters had not yet returned, but as we were speculating upon the long delay, the heroes hove in sight, but hovered about like so many blessings at a very unfamiliar distance. "What could the mat-

ter be?" was the universal inquiry. Not until we had camped did these knight-errants deign to approach us. Curiosity was satisfied; "Oh! their offence was rank—it smelled to Heaven"—they had unquestionably slain their victim. The spades having been diligently plied for a time, little French, who had been foremost in the fray was induced to get down in filial proximity to his mother earth, and feel for the tenant of this under-ground establishment. Thrusting his arm its full length into the hole, he twined his fingers into the long coarse hair of a shaggy little animal—what *could* it be! A pull, a lusty scratching a smothered squeak—out came the creature—ye Gods! what "gales of Araby" are these? Little French, jumping upon the bank with the particolored animal squirming in his nervous grasp, declared by the great—that he had rather kill two *Booflo* than dig out one *"Porkskupine!"*

It was a glorious morning, the 14th of June, just as the "red streamer that heralds the day" was crimsoning the distant east—that East! how much does one little word sometimes imply!—it was then that we obtained the first view of two lone peaks at the distance of fifty-five miles, piercing the blue and hollow heaven, lifting their slender forms, and catching upon their lofty tops the first kindling of far coming morn and the last glimmer of the closing day—there they stand, like twin candelabra in some "dim and mighty minster of old time," amid

the breathless solitudes and voiceless worship of those far-distant regions. What an extinguisher to poetic sentiment is the intimation that those heaven-bended spars delight in the appellation of "*Rabbit Ears!*" "Antony's Nose" carved out by Nature in some playful mood, on the Highlands of the Hudson, will do—there is something classical in the allusion, but Rabbit Ears! shade of Midas! what a misnomer!

A Caravan Encampment upon the Plains.

CHAPTER TENTH

Mountain Scenery—Dividing the Company—Mexicans—Utaw Indians—A touch of a Skirmish.

HE scene is changed! Like some battle-field of mighty giants it seems, strewn with the missiles they had hurled in some wild affray long ago. Huge fragments of rock are heaped upon the plain, with little cedars struggling to gain a hold in the scanty soil that sprinkles their crevices, while for the boundless stretch of level prairie, deep and rugged ravines festooned with vines and tangled with briars, meet the eye. Here and there a spreading cedar stands out alone and tempts us with its shade, while clear, cold springs gush up from the clefted and mossy rocks and remind us of "the moss-covered bucket that hung in the well" ere we had wept or wandered. The thundering tramp of the Buffalo no longer greets our ears. Antelope fly away at our approach, the little gray rabbit and its great grandfather, that is, a species thrice its size that has run mostly to *ears*, skip from crevice to crevice, while a red deer occasionally bounds out from some dark ravine, only to bound back again. Phlegmatic snakes of divers colors lie lazily sunning themselves upon the rocks; the weather warm and delightful is making every ef-

fort to call out something else, but vegetation proves refractory and stupidly suffers a default; and we have just now nothing to do, but to kill snakes, shoot rabbits, batter a target, lounge generally, and wonder what the end of these things shall be.

Three days brought us to the "Point of Rocks," fairly among the breaks of the mountains. The mountains! "Thanks be to God for the mountains!" exclaimed the Waldenses of olden time, as their sweet but simple songs swept like the breezes of morning through the Alpine caves and over the gray and venerable altars carved by Him who "notched His centuries in the eternal rocks." Away on, a frosted furrow in God's fallow field, the chain of the mighty Cordilleras rises in the clear heaven, cliff above cliff, glittering in the sun, softening in the shade, fading in the distance and melting in the azure. Around those lofty crags—far down their gray and lightning-smitten sides, the curtaining clouds are gathered gloomily, fold over fold, looped and adjusted by the fingers of Omnipotence. Down they fall mid way the mountain, the sublime drapery of the storm. Now this temple-veil is rent by a glance from the Inner Presence. "From crag to crag leaps the live thunder." Down rushes the rain till the quiet vales below are vocal with the merry music of the ringing drops and the murmuring of brooks and the loud acclaim of water-falls. In a moment, those clouds have vanished—the storm has passed away—

those heights where a hundred winters have drifted, are kindling in the sun, and the cascades are dancing and bounding along to a new tune of their own! The sublimity of the Northern clime where

> **Changeless—eternal—all their own**
> **God and His winter dwell a one,**

is not here. Awe and beauty are strangely mingled; the lightning's shaft darts quivering to its quarry, and straight upon the cloud, is bent the bow that sped it.

If anything having the touch of earth can kindle the glory of poetic feeling till it warms round the heart and informs the whole being, it is some mighty mountain chain—the lookout and the "land! ho!" of two oceans—the tie that binds two continents in one—whether as the rugged Rocky,the glittering Cordilleras, or the Andes with their snowy heights and banners of red aflame, they seem the mapped-out route, the electric chain along whose links flashes the lightning-thought till it comprehends the globe.

Alike out of the Buffalo and the Indian "range," eight of the wagons with the best teams parted from the main company, and hastened on to reach the mountain-pass before the others should arrive. Seven of the "dug outs," as they termed the small two-mule wagons, accompanied the advance, and on the 20th of June we encamped upon the rocky banks of the Canadian river. There, beneath the shade of over-hanging cedars, we turned our animals loose, form-

ed no "corral," and with the light-heartedness and security of a pic-nic party, we prepared our breakfast and angled in the eddies for black bass. The approach of a party of Mexicans was now discovered, whom we mistook for custom-house officers who frequently pay companies official visits at this point, but upon their arrival, we learned that they were on a trading excursion among the Indians.

We congratulated ourselves upon the information they brought us that the Indians were at a distance, when the vision of a "red skin" darting across a ravine checked the pleasurable sentiment, and the luxury of fancied security was again denied us. The Mexicans professed utter ignorance of their proximity, but apprehensive of treachery, we detained ten as hostages, while the remaining two were despatched to capture the questionable game. Springing into their saddles, they were off at a brisk gallop to the brow of the hill—"flushed" the rascal from a cover of little cedars at the bottom of the ravine, and dashed down the steep declivity Putnam-like, while the Indian rose the opposite hill like a bird, and flew over the smooth ground like a swallow. Up dash the Mexicans "in full cry," and away scud the three like clouds before the blast. The whips and spurs of New Market could not possibly have accelerated the flight. The Indian lay so close to the neck of his horse that it was difficult to discover him, save when he turned to look after his pursuers. His horse

was urged to the top of his bent, but on kept the Mexicans, steadily gaining, until as they disappeared over a hill there was but a length between the pursuers and the pursued, near enough at least to produce a most horrible discord as they yelled a sort of *fugue* accompaniment to the flying feet. In the mean time we looked to our "match-locks," despatched an express to our companions, the purport of which was that we should be happy to see them *sans ceremonie*. After an absence of half an hour, the Mexicans returned with their captive, a young chief of the Utaw tribe, short, athletic, sullen and nearly naked. Presently ten of his companions emerged from their hiding-place presented themselves and informed us with a most gracious air, that they had four hundred fighting men at hand, and proceeded to levy a tax upon "tobac," knives, powder, red cloth and lead, with a precision and particularity that betrayed most thorough practical acquaintance with the contents of a caravan's baggage wagons. Not a little apprehensive, we parleyed with them for delay, when much to our satisfaction, the remainder of our company hove in sight; whereupon we balanced the books by footing the tax-gatherers out of the camp; they took the hint and left us without so much as bidding us farewell. One of them ranked as war Chief, and could not be less than a century old. He was an insulting old fellow, and nothing but his *antiquity* saved him from receiving

"a reward of merit." One of the company was quietly napping under a wagon, and to the incessant inquiries of the old chief for "Captana—Captana," we pointed to the sleeper. Thereupon he rode up to the wagon and in a perfect jargon of broken English, limping Spanish and hobbling Utaw, called upon the slumberer. Indignant at the silence of his Morphean respondent, he leaped from his mustang, and very familiarly dragged him out by the coat. This had the effect to awake two instead of one, viz: the sleeper and his temper besides, and seizing an antelope skin just stripped from the animal, he slapped it, flesh side down, flat upon the old gray pate, and giving his horse at the same time, two or three blows with a ramrod, off bounded the steed out of camp, to the no small amusement of the whole crowd.

When the intelligence of the anticipated attack of the Indians became general, it was easy to distinguish the craven and the brave. Some who had talked valiantly of bullets and battles, and indulged in not a few expletives borrowed from "our army in Flanders," indicative of the extreme contempt they felt for foes generally and Indians in particular, now hurried about like spirits prematurely wakened, and "whispered with white lips, the foe—they come—they come!" One poor fellow of this genus flitted about with trembling steps, begging a percussion cap here and borrowing a patch there, while in

truth he had not a single rifle ball to bless himself with. In the course of his perambulations, he accosted one of the coolest, bravest, most self-possessed men in the company: "Why in Heaven's name, do you not prepare for the attack?" The miserable fellow's teeth fairly chattered at the thought as he gave it utterance. His auditor was busily preparing breakfast for the mess, whistling merrily, as ever and anon he turned a fine fat sirloin of antelope upon the spit. Glancing at his terrified companion, our knight of the camp kettle thrust his arms akimbo, and giving a shrill yell a la Tecumseh and executing a pigeon-wing a la Francais, screamed out like an eagle, "waiter! scalps for two—ro-asted," and resumed his culinary avocations. The startled craven grew furious, but finally lulled like a frightened infant, and hurried away to obtain consolation in another quarter.

The main body of the company having now arrived, we moved off. The Indians in full force came into view while we were crossing the river, and after executing a variety of caracols saluted us with a scattering and ineffective fire from about thirty guns. Having been ordered not to return the salutation unless they ventured within arrow shot, we kept on our way. Sometimes a random shot struck a mule or lodged in a wagon, and sometimes we heard the peculiar music that Charles the 12th loved so well, as a bullet whistled over our heads. Our

route lay at the base of an upland, and we moved on with the intention of reaching the water before we gave battle. The Indians were well mounted, and rode in file at full speed along the brow of the bluff, and as they came into view, dropped from their saddles as by magic, and the horses, apparently riderless, galloped along the ridge and disappeared. This dexterous feat is performed by each rascal's catching his heel on the back part of the saddle, and slipping on the opposite side of the horse, showing no more of himself than a foot on the saddle and occasionally the glimpse of a bushy head beneath the neck of the well trained steed. On coming to the point where the road wound around the promontorial bluff, the crafty fellows dropped to the ground and crawled to the edge of the bank, keeping so close to the ground that a glass was necessary to discover them. Two of our scouts had watched the manoeuvre however, and announced this change in the play in time for us to withdraw to the prairie beyond the range of their arrows. Rising in a body, they held a brief council, then forming a circle round our cavalcade, taking good care to keep beyond the reach of an awkward bullet, they rode, yelled and made a target of us for a couple of hours. This *modus operandi* was exceedingly annoying, both to men and mules, while the want of water superadded, rendered our situation far from enviable. Waxing bold at the silence of our

rifles, the chief now dashed out from the file and approached within far, but by no means certain shot. Houck, who by the way was an excellent marksman ,watched his opportunity, and at a favorable moment discharged a rifle at him. The chief reeled in the saddle, and was caught by one of his party just as he was falling to the ground. The whole band of red-skins gathered round their prostrate leader, and presently the unearthly, piercing and prolonged war cry of the whole host swept down upon us loud, quivering and shrill as the shriek of the storm-spirits. The Indians were now in full motion. One detachment wheeled off at a hand gallop, for the purpose of cutting off our approach to water, while the remainder of the troop kept up a very industrious fire upon us. Their movement had been already anticipated, for the Captain, three comrades and the writer had already passed over half the distance to the rocks the Indians intended to occupy. Discovering our design, they attempted to compel us to rejoin our companions by a feint to cut us off from the main body. They had their trouble for their pains, while we kept on, attained the rocky banks of the Okata and secreted ourselves before the Indians could come up. About sixty of them came dashing along the low ground, but halted before they came within reach of our rifles—a fortunate pause for the integrity of their red jackets. The wagons having arrived, an encampment was formed, including in its area, a section of the stream.

The animals were secured, the fires kindled, and while preparing the frugal meal of dried meat, each one recounted the dangers he had seen, the hair-breadth 'scapes, and verily had there been maidens there, like the fair Desdemona, there would have been no lack of "pity" and of love. While seated by a blazing pine knot fire, partaking of our simple fare, the guard sounded the alarm, and "Indians! Indians!" rang through the camp. Instantly every fire went out like a gas light, with the aid of a pail of water provided for the occasion, and every man, life in one hand and death in the other, viz: meat and rifles, were prepared to feast or fight. There happened to be no occasion for the latter, and as to the former, there was no opportunity; for reason, see last report of the "cupboard" committee under the Administration of the forlorn Mrs. Hubbard. The time has now come to take to the blanket. but ere we bid the reader "good night," let us give him (?) a theme for a dream.

A picture of the personages who have annoyed us so seriously during the day, would be by no means a pleasant study for the lovers of beauty. They are not the splendid models of manliness and symmetry, the "Nature's noblemen" whom the eloquent Story so graphically portrayed, but as disgusting a tribe of creatures as ever darkened the earth. Boasting of morality, their virtue springs from necessity; exulting in the purity of the Utaw blood, unmingled with the current that flows in other veins, they are

repulsive to every better type of humanity, and it would be difficult to find one worse. They fancy the purest clay was employed in their composition by the Great Father of red men; if anything earthly was wanting in their original manufacture, they have amply made it up in the liberal accessions of dirt to the dingy black surface, which subserves the purpose of a covering. Small in stature, they claim Herculean strength, and the hair, which is the pride of most Indians, is left to the dressing of wind, rain and sun, until it becomes matted completely to their heads. Such is the picture which we command as the nucleus of a dream, to the lovers of the airy creations of sleep-land.

Morning dawned, and the Beauties who had been foiled in their stratagem of the previous day, were scouting in all directions, stationing themselves now behind this bluff and now behind that, whence they fled precipitately at our approach, and filing off to the mountains, abandoned the field. We now passed leisurely on, and at evening camped at the "wagon mound," a huge collection of detached rocks, thrown by some convulsion of Nature into a shape corresponding with that of a covered wagon.

Some visionary will undoubtedly see in it a petrifaction of an enormous "Hoosier" wagon, and in the Buffalo, the degenerate offspring of the original team that drew the ponderous wain over the Prairies in those days when there were giants! Thus much for a *theory*.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

The Valley of Moro—A Mexican Dairyman—Vegas —Running the Guy—A feast and a fandango—Brunettes—The Pass.

TWO grey eagles of enormous magnitude we captured in this vicinity, that had dined so heartily upon Antelope that they were unable to "make a raise," and were made prisoners amid a prodigious flapping of pinions. They are noble birds in their native element or perched upon some lofty mountain crag, but gorged and squatting upon the low and level earth, there was nothing about them to kindle the poetic fire, but the scrubby pines that struggled up from the rocky clefts furnished an abundance of fuel for the camp-kettles, whose bubbling is music and poetry beside, to the ear of a hungry hunter.

Several of the company again left the main body, and enjoyed a hearty dinner of trout speckled and silvery, taken from the pure cold waters of the Moro Creek. The title to the beautiful valley watered by this stream, is derived from a grant by the Mexican Government to our worthy Consul at Santa Fe, Señor Alvarez.

Immense flocks of Mexican sheep once pastured

here, but the Utaws serving a writ of ejectment upon the shepherds, it is now untenanted save by herds of watchful Antelope, that bound over the green plains and lie beside the still waters.

Leaving this unsung "Avoca" of the wilderness, we pushed on over a high, rolling and gravelly region, hoping to reach the Vegas, the first Mexican settlement, before evening. Yankee curiosity was on tenter hooks, and everyone on the lookout for the first glimpse of the Mexican town. In the afternoon, we met a swarthy villager on a marketing excursion, having with him "all and singular," one curd cheese of dark complexion, which was not regarded as strange, seeing that it was a Mexican cheese. Unfamiliar as was its hue, we speedily purchased and devoured it. The owner of the aforesaid product of the dairy, now claimed our attention. In lieu of a "pocket full of rocks," he carried a huge stone in each hand as a currency in time of battle. Not having the fear of these formidable weapons before their eyes, some of the "b'hoys" commanded him to surrender his precious person as a prisoner of *war*, and with the greatest gravity in life, marched him solemnly and ceremoniously to and fro, to the extreme "bodily fear" of the poor fellow. Finally he was liberated from durance vile, with a volley from our rifles discharged harmlessly over his head, and a demon scream, which sent a chill through his frame, and his frame on its way home with the

speed of an Antelope. Never again, we venture to say, did he venture forth on a cheese embassy to the jolly fellows that cross the plains on their way to Santa Fe.

The following day, we encamped in the suburbs of Vegas, a village of about five hundred inhabitants. It is situated at the eastern base of the mountains, and resembles at a distance a collection of unburnt brick-kilns. The dwellings are of mud, one story in height, regularly arranged around a square, which has but two entrances, an eastern and western. These gate-ways are closed at evening lest the meditations of the valorous inhabitants may be disturbed by the nocturnal visits of Indians. A crystal stream, the Gallinas, which is, being interpreted, Chicken Creek, leaps sparkling from the mountain to the bosom of the sunny plain, watering in its way, a fertile vale of about one hundred acres, a perfect nestling place for vegetation and checked off by fences of brush into a patch-work of wheat and corn that contrasted beautifully with the solemn wastes and rugged frowning cliffs that surround it. It looked like smiling infancy throned in the lap of wrinkled and frosty age. Having been so long isolated from the world, like so many tars after a long voyage, we were blessed with an exuberance of good feeling that bubbled over at the contemplation of every object; from the Mexican to his mules, all was alike wonderful; a perfect model of its kind. We even

felt a sort of affection for his poultry. In short, we had become enthusiastic in spite of ourselves, and *felt* poetry, every mother's son of us, although perhaps not one of us could have *written* a solitary couplet.

The day being claimed by the friends of good old St. John, was consecrated to the dinner, the dance and the games with which the descendants of the Incas and Castilians are wont to celebrate the birth day of their patron Saint. A merry, busy company were we to be sure. Such a drenching of socks and linen had not occurred since the deluge of Deucalion; mending moccasins, cutting hair, cooking Antelope, reaping chins, buying chickens, trading for cheese, shooting at a target, swapping mules, cracking jokes—these and operations like these, formed the toilette exercises, previous to the morning sports. Equipped in our best—best is very uncertain in its signification—a number of us proceeded to the "town" as the huddle was facetiously termed, and mounted upon the ruins of some dilapidated truck-wheel carts that had been piled up to give "room and verge" for the performance. We were not without our attendants, for all the ragged urchins in the place surrounded us instanter, and fairly devoured us with their eyes. A novel funeral ceremony opened the performance. Ten innocent chickens were buried, all save the heads which were left above ground as if to superintend operations—certainly a singular manifestation of the earth's fer-

tility. These chickens were planted at some distance from each other and their locality indicated by a small flag that fluttered near. This proceeding was Greek to us and to the chickens also, for they evidently felt that they were made game of. There was one notable chanticleer however, that nothing daunted crowed most lustily in good Mexican, sounding very much like "Who's-a-fra-id?" Meanwhile, twenty-five horsemen had ranged themselves near our venerable observatory, and at a preconcerted signal, put spurs to their horses and set off pellmell for the flag. The advance rider reached from his saddle and catching the head of the first chicken, decapitated it in an instant, his horse the while not lessening his speed. On crowded his companions, one after another making a pass at a head, then riding on, they wheeled, passing and repassing, until all the chickens were decapitated, when the game was up. It was altogether a strange scene, and as near like weeding a garden on horseback at a hand gallop, as anything to which we can compare it.

The bodies of the hapless chickens were then exhumed by young girls, who having decked their heads with the curving tail feathers of the fowls, after a manner quite "civilized," proceeded to prepare the poor birds for the feast. Meanwhile altogether another game was being enacted upon the plain after this wise. Each cavalier, with a dark-eyed brunette before him upon the saddle, one arm encircling

her slender waist, was racing tantivy over the plain, like an express for Gretna Green. One or two, doubly gallant, persuaded a laughing girl from the group who stood near us, to mount behind, and thus more than "fore-armed," dashed away to make the circuit of the field with his merry comrades. Some of the "wee bits" of humanity or more strictly Mexicanity, placed a huge saddle upon a mule, the only specimen of the genus *equus* at their disposal, and four or five mounting the patient creature, they jogged at rather a shambling pace around the square. At length the donkey "bowed his reverend head" and away went the "little responsibilities" like a row of nine-pins, and with as little injury, to the ground.

Then came the feast, and we being among the invited, came also. The large room was neatly carpeted for the occasion with blankets of fine texture. Jars and dishes of various shapes and capacities were arranged upon tables next to the whitewashed wall, and the benches—Mexican Sofas—were ready to sink beneath the rows of frontier beauties that occupied them. The whole battery of black and brilliant eyes was at once brought to bear upon us—a formidable array to be sure, for a bachelor to withstand. There we were, between the "dears" and the dinner, brunettes and buttered onions. "Love is blind," so the poets say, and unmindful of our gallantry after time, we addressed ourselves with com-

mendable zeal to the delights of the table. The lot of the writer, he is sorry to say it, was cast between a couple of matronly Señoras, who had looked at the other sex something more than ten years through spectacles. One of them was suddenly seized with a bleeding at the nose—romantic incident—which, fortunate circumstance, left her place vacant, and myself next neighbor to a paroquettish, lively Señorita, who kept up an incessant fire of unintelligibles with my venerable left hand companion, and amid bewitching glances and most musical laughter, we made a dinner of tortillas, attolla, butter, cheese, onions, mutton, trout, eggs, never forgetting the chickens, which brought up the rear of this bill of fare. Just at this precise moment, the last chicken having been duly dissected and dispatched, a troop of huckster boys crowded the entrance with the dessert, consisting of cake and *peneones* (a small pine nut) each one being at liberty to take as much as he pleased for himself and fair coadjutors in this noble work of eating, provided he *paid* for it. This was a new feature in giving dinners and we jotted it down.

Another fancy feat of horsemanship followed, when knights and ladies, all retired to take the indispensable *siesta*. The village was deserted save by a parcel of urchins in paper-mill wardrobe—rags—who gathered around our wagons, either from curiosity or cupidity. Now and then a young girl

presented herself, with a chicken under an arm, a jar of goat's milk poised upon her head or an apron-full of eggs, all of which would be offered for sale, with such a smile, that, put upon our gallantry the fair seller always disposed of her little venture at rates very much above "price current." But who could help it? Such winning, laughing *Señoritas*—what old bachelors *wouldn't* discount liberally to buy off the temptation, and willingly pay double price for the eggs, milk and chickens?

But the Fandango! Nine o'clock came at last, and the scene of operations—a hall one hundred feet in length and twelve in width, with a hard earthen floor—was thronged with the youth and beauty of the place and numerous specimens of two or three generations that preceeded them— wrinkled "second childhood" and loveliness survived. Our arrival produced quite a sensation. After a suitable amount of rustling and whispering, to say nothing of the glancing, for that continued "e'en until the morn," a ragged minstrel throned on a platform at one extremity of the apartment, commenced twanging the strings of a crazy guitar. One of our friends gave the signal from a favorite drum, calling out in Spanish, "Ladies! join hands and circle all round," and in English, "Gentlemen, join hands and circle outside." As the circle came round, each gentleman selected a partner from the less circle, and all whirled off in the mazes of the giddy waltz.

This was prosecuted with such vigor and so long, that as the floor became dry, the dust rolled up in majestic clouds at every turn, which, it must be confessed, gave a very mysterious and romantic effect to this assembly-room *stampedo*. One set becoming weary, seated themselves, while the floor underwent the process of sprinkling and sweeping. The loosened dust was taken up in leathern aprons by those who enacted the part of "professors of dust and ashes" on this extraordinary occasion. Again the music struck up a lively air, and again a merry company whirled away in the dizzy dance. Thus passed our night among this loving people, and ere Aurora had time to blush for the follies the dusky night left unreproved, our cavalcade was on its winding way, threading the rugged labyrinths, and toil-

A Cavalcade in a Mountain Pass.

ing up the acclivities of the mountain pass towards the city of the Holy Faith.

Our route for two or three miles from Vegas, lay in a southern direction at the very base of the mountain, then turning north through the gap, followed the course of a little stream along the rocky cliffs. Pine and cedar skirted the way, while vines festooned the rocks or swung like drapery in the breeze. Ravines dark with tangled briars and shrubbery, yawned upon us as we passed; the road was a bed of sand and gravel, washed by rains from the higher land, presenting a treacherous surface that yielded at every step. The breeze scarce dared to whisper through this gloomy vale, though the cool springs that gushed here and there from the mountain side compensated in part for the heat and closeness of the rarer element. Legitimate game seldom ventured within the precincts of this cheerless spot; buzzards, crows, and birds of similar bad *taste,* from some dry tree overlooked the scene, and screamed dismally through the solemn silence. A spiteful bullet sometimes glanced from the knotty limb they perched upon, or saucily carried away a tuft of feathers; then lazily spreading their wings, they flapped away through the dull atmosphere to loftier and safer quarters far up the mountain. The thought of dying in such a place, with a dirge of wolves rolling out from the hollow caverns, and birds of evil omen spreading their wings for pall in

one's dying eyes! Oh! "There's no would one die, if not there? To fall in place like home" to dwell in, and where the day and on the field of battle, is not death, but a wild and delightful delirium that breaks only with the dawn of a new and untried being.

After a toilsome journey of twelve miles, we encamped at the favorite Spring of St. Michael that gushes from the base of the magnificent peak whence it derives its name. The latter is a sort of *swivel* in the mountain chain, detached by a deep chasm nearly a quarter of a mile in width, and rising bold and rough, nearly to the summit, where a natural altar of reddish earth, as if stained by some great offering, is spread abroad, whence rise rocky columns to its top surmounted with a fret work of pendent cedars.

Some difference of opinion being expressed relative to the dimensions of this singular structure, and as we were to remain at the spring a considerable time for repairs, five of the company determined to ascend and settle the question by actual measurement. Mounting their mules, these Humbolts of a day set forth and commenced the ascent. For an hour or more, they clambered bravely up, but then a barrier of precipitous rock interposed, and the mules having been secured upon the mountain side, the party proceeded on foot until they attained a huge fragment of rock, which, like the celebrated

"Rocking Stone" among the Druidical remains of the old world, tempted the application of a lever. The temptation was resistless—the mechanical power applied, when over rolled the huge mass, "impetuous with a bound," zigzag down the mountain's rugged side—loosening this peaceful rock and turning that quiet stone into a projectile, fierce as a Grecian Catapult, on they tumbled, ploughing up the sand and scattering the gravel like a legion of muskets. The whole fabric seemed making the best of its way to the plain, fragment by fragment. The mules broke from their fastenings and snorting, joined the race—their quondam riders seized with this Newmarket propensity scampered hard after them, and for a moment, it seemed likely that men, mules and mountain would make the balance of the trip to Santa Fe in company. "How high is the peak of St. Michael's?" was thereafter a poser, and a perfect quietus upon any one of the five who at any time attempted to be witty at the expense of a companion.

There must be a "St. Michael" contagion in this region, or as the knife-grinder classically expressed it, *"names is ketching,"* for on the 26th of June, we arrived at a little village, of fifteen hundred inhabitants, beautifully situated in the valley of the Pecos, that delights in the appellation of St. Michael. The crystal stream that waters this vale is conducted in artificial channels all about the town.

The low land along the creek is checkered with wheat, corn and beans, sufficient for the indolent villagers who subsist mostly upon milk and mutton, when not too lazy to prepare it. A few of them are shepherds or trappers, but the majority belong to the "Upper ten thousand."

But indolent as they were, a fandango was their delight, and the b'hoys of our company participated in the festivity which indeed was made in their especial honor. But pleasures must have an end, and our messmates having danced to the tune "we'll not go home till morning," made their appearance—it needed making *over* if we could judge—highly pleased—their pleasure was high, not themselves. One of them had lost his gold lever and the appendages thereto, and it may be a question whether they all did not lose their time as well as their sleep. The unfortunate loser had forgotten that when among those whose fingers are as light as their toes, it was necessary "to pocket his watch and watch his pocket." To regain the toy, he was compelled to pay that worthy dignitary the Alcalde three dollars for his services in making out the documents—Alcaldes must live, but then they would have charged him five this side the mountains—which, together with half a crown *extra* slipped quietly into his hand, finished the business in a trice and the watch was forthcoming. Well was it for the owner that it was not a suit in Chancery, for the watch would have run itself to death before the decision.

CHAPTER TWELFTH

One of the Smiths—Custom House Officers—Comanches—The ruins of Pecos—Montezuma's Vestal fire—The Church—The maiden of the Ruins—More Ramblings.

DELUSION is like the foolish bird of the desert, that thrusting its head into the sand vainly imagines that its whole body is concealed. A poor believer in the doctrines of Nauvoo crossed the plains with a company that preceded us, and arriving at this point, left the protection of his comrades and set off alone with his small wagon of merchandise, trusting neither to rifle nor sword, but fancying himself equipped from the bright armory of Heaven, he went his way. At the time of our arrival, a year had elapsed since his departure, yet no tidings had been received from this Saint of the Latter day. His scalp may perhaps adorn some Indian wigwam, and his bones be tombless and bleaching upon the plain. Is it true that tears fall for all that die? Then has he been wept in some home of the green earth now desolate.

Just as we were leaving the village of St. Michael, a party consisting of three Americans, five Custom House officers and as many brace of Mexican loafers,

met us from Santa Fe. Our "plunder" had been disposed in anticipation of this visit, so that five loads were somehow compressed into four, a decided speculation on the part of the owners, as legal merchandise is taxed by the load. The contraband articles, powder and tobacco, were already *en route* for Santa Fe on pack-mules. So we put on a bold face and welcomed the functionaries as in duty bound. Passing the village of St. Joseph—saintly places they are in these regions—our way now led us through scenery fearfully sublime. Now climbing precipices of shelving and crumbling rocks—cliff above crag piled like Ossa upon Pelion and crested with perennial snows—awful chasms filled with night yawning hundreds of feet beneath—now descending into some dark and rugged gorge, and now emerging, away we wind and clamber on upon the brink of those unsounded depths—a step would precipitate us into Eternity. At a cool and shady spring, in the midst of this heaping up of sublimity, we encamped. A pack of gray wolves set up their dismal howl in our vicinity till cliff and crag and cave took up the sound, and the mountain rang with an hundred packs of echoes. In this wild glen, we were visited by sixty Comanches professing friendship and a desire to trade. They are a noble race, wild as the uncaved winds. Mounted on the fleet steeds of the plain caparisoned with scalps and crimson, cloth, armed with bow and lance, their buckskin wrappers

secured with wampum girdle, their breasts and arms bare and bronzed, fringed leggins, embroidered moccasins and a crest of eagle's quills, they are pictures to look at, and at home, alike upon mountain or plain, among the savage and the civilized. Over a territory extending from the Arkansas to the very centre of the Mexican Republic, and as far west as the Del Norte, their 16,000 warriors roam in bands of fifty or a hundred and enact the Ishmaelite. From their homes on the Red River, they go forth for treachery and plunder—to hear the music of the war-cry and to dye their hands in human blood. Such were our guests, but by a proper distribution of presents and soft words, they passed the night without so much as a dream of slaughter for aught we knew, and pushed on before us for Santa Fe, there to await our arrival and prepare for future "speculations."

On the 28th, crags and points, ravines and rocks were the order of the day, and a toilsome journey from day break to sunset advanced us five miles on our way. In a triangular valley, beneath the Gothic arches of a patriarchal elm, at the foot of a gentle declivity, and in sight of the gray ruins of the ancient Pueblo city of Pecos, our camp-fires were kindled, and threw their fitful shadows over as wild a scene as painter ever limned or poet sang. The rude ballads of the heedless hunters mingled with the unwritten melody of the moaning wind. Wearied with toil,

we sank to slumber, that needed no downy pillow to enhance its sweetness, forgetful alike of the grandeur and the desolation, nor woke until

> "————the jocund day
> Stood tip-toe on the misty mountain top."

In the midst of a triangular valley, formed by the junction of the pass through which we traveled, a deep gorge extending from the south and a rugged defile stretching away to the south-west, the ruins of the once fortified city of Pecos lie mouldering. Whom Time loveth, he honoreth, and over these memorials of a mighty past, has he flung the silver of age and the gray moss of forgetfulness. This crescent city of the lonely mountains, with a curve of two miles, and a breadth of three-quarters, surrounded by a wall of rock and surmounted with bastions, once filled with life and love and hope, like the halls of Ossian is now deserted and lone. The gates that once swung to their pillars of stone, a stronger than Sampson had borne away. Entering these solemn portals, the squirrels darted to their retreats and the rabbits hid themselves among the weeds that waved as if in mockery of man, over some ruin fast crumbling to dust. One building alone—a vast cathedral, had withstood the touch of time, its walls of earth and stone yet remaining a trembling monument to the fame of Montezuma. Within, burns an altar fire lighted, as tradition says, three centuries ago, by the warrior chief's own

hand. Three hundred years! Ere the May-flower drifted to Plymouth's snowy rock, this vestal flame was burning. The generation that saw it lighted have gone down to the dead. Children's children have bowed with dim and fading eyes before that sacred fire. War came and quenched a nation's life in blood, and yet 'twas burning on. Time came next —it touched the temples and they tottered, the columns and they fell, and yet till Montezuma shall return—so ran the charge—that fire must burn. A scattered remnant of a mighty race still feed it lingering and low with fuel from the mountain's side —still children of the sun and worshippers of fire, they bow before it—still sacred to the memory of him that kindled it and returns no more. A poet's theme, it needs no gifted one to weave it into song.

The apartment in which this vestal flame is burning, is two hundred and forty feet in length, twenty in width and fifty-six in height. The ceiling is constructed of hewn timbers placed parallel to each other, curiously wrought and ornamented. A slight pulpit adorned with a tasteful balustrade projects like a swallow's nest from the chancel wall, something more than twelve feet from the floor; the only entrance to this unique little structure, being from the rear, through a door hung upon hinges of stone. A narrow gallery springs out from the walls on each side, finished in similar style with the pulpit; also along the other three walls; in front entirely

across, and upon the sides nearly half the distance. No way of access to these galleries is visible save by ladders placed in front. A portico singularly constructed and covered with mysterious hieroglyphics adorns the front, while at its angles are the dilapidated remains of towers, whence in times of old, the deep toned bell may have rung its matin peal or vesper chime, as the mountain cliffs kindled in the morning or the evening smile of the Peruvian's great divinity, the glorious Sun. We can almost pardon while we pity the idolatry that sees therein more than the Revelator saw—no angel, but a very God. The noblest, brightest type of an all-circling energy, a great station point for upward-bound thought, awed with its glory, the untaught spirit folds her pinions and bows in silent worship upon its burning shore. From this spacious apartment of the cathedral, doors led away to smaller rooms, damp, gloomy and deserted, the abode of spiders and bats that crept and fluttered in perennial twilight. Each cloister, cell and closet was eloquent of thought, and it almost seemed as if memory could recall the incidents that had transpired and the actors that had dwelt within these mysterious walls. But no maiden murmured her orisons before that dimly lighted chancel; no robed and solemn priest officiated at the broken altar; no prisoner moaned in the hollow dungeon; "the daughters of music were brought low;" the warriors went forth no more to battle. They are gone—all

gone, and this their monument. Had they hopes like us? Surely, and *they* too have perished.

Leaving this romantic ruin, we strolled away among the relics of the fallen city and observing a habitation that seemed to be preserved by some hidden charm from the decay that had conquered all around, we entered and the mystery was revealed to our eyes. An aged female, upon whose withered face Time had written "passing away" in characters strangely legible, sat listlessly working her shrivelled fingers among locks of tangled gray, that had once been black and glossy as the tresses of the daughter who sat beside her. With sunken eyes filled with strange indifference and sadness—the eyes of one who lived only in the past—she regarded our entrance amid the sacred ruin of her ancestral home. There sat the maiden—a girl of "sweet sixteen," beating a drum and chanting some mournful song. A shade of melancholy lent extraordinary interest to her Grecian features, and though the summer's sun had kissed her cheek too lovingly, yet nobody could find it in his heart to blame the gallant Phoebus. Many a dame of high degree would do penance or pilgrimage for a dark and meaning eye like hers. Many a belle in fashion's brilliant halls would jilt a lover for tresses so near like night, and a foot so near like a fairy's, as hers. With a grace that would do honor to a daughter of proud Castile, did she welcome us to the balcony, and a sweet theme would she be for legendary song or story.

The building thus romantically occupied, unlike the modern residences of the Spanish Mexicans, was two stories in height, with no entrance below; a light ladder let down from a projecting balcony being the only way of entrance or egress. This is easily withdrawn, and the mansion is secure as a castle. How many minstrels in olden time, may have lingered beneath that airy balcony, and made sweet music on the listening ear of beauty, we leave the poets to determine. While resting upon a lounge in the porch, we persuaded the mother and daughter to favor us with a song. The voice of the "toothless crone" was sadly dissonant, but the dulcet tones of the lovely girl, who poured forth the rich accents of her mother tongue in melody, caused us to forget the discord and the fancy touches upon the sounding drum. The song was ended, and with true Spanish hospitality, they proffered the only refreshment the house afforded—cold water and curd cheese—" 'twas all they had" and we would not have added to it if we could. It was the pure offering of gentle, generous souls—a service of plate could not enrich it, nor honied words enhance its value. Age may fix a wrinkle where a smile once loved to play—misfortune may change the heart's sweet pulses into a fountain of Marah, but the seal of a soul no time nor change can totally efface. Giving a porcelain pipe and a store of the "Indian weed" to the old lady, and a locket looking glass—didn't we understand

the weakness of Eve's daughters?—to the youthful songster, we departed, laden with the blessings of both mother and child.

Another novelty next attracted our attention; two circular apartments in the earth, about twelve feet in depth and fifteen in diameter, smoothly walled and an opening at the top four feet square, through which we effected our entrance into these subterranean apartments. The smooth and hardened floor was slightly hollowed in the centre for a fire-place. In these strange council chambers, the chiefs of the ancient race were accustomed to assemble, and concert plans for aggressive or defensive war. But all this availed nothing. The northern gorge was filled with the foe, and the western defile echoed with the thunder-tread of armed hosts. The banners of Spain were borne in triumph to the gates of the devoted city. Spires of flame shot up above its loftiest towers, and wrapped its homes in a winding sheet of fire. Blood ran down its streets; shrieks for mercy and the Pean of a victorious foe went blended and quivering to Heaven. Temples were desecrated, altars were overthrown and priests were immolated at the very shrines at whose horrid rites they themselves had presided. The storm has passed and the Aeolian breath of evening mournfully murmurs over the ruins of the once proud city of the Pecos.

Dwelling in the twilight of a brighter day, this people moved in a world of shadowy illusions, sac-

rificing peace and life itself to a wild and Utopian dream. Today, the flickering flame burns in the altarplace that has survived the hope and the homes of a great people. Today they watch its feeble light that warms not and cheers not, and as they gaze, a semblance of gladness glitters in their eyes, the reflection of its ray, as they offer sacrifices to a divinity that never deigns to answer or to bless. To-day they move like beings of a long gone time amid the solemn desolation and must ere long be themselves extinguished in the utter night of a nation's grave. The haughty Castilian that sat down by the hearth he had desolated, and clanked in armor through the halls he had desecrated, already grows pale at the Anglo Saxon touch, and must ere long be numbered with the beings that were, and are not.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

Rio Del Norte—Smuggling—Entrance into Santa Fe—Officials—Gold Mine—Gentlemen about Town.

WEST of the mountains! yes, patient reader, we at last had the pleasure of encamping at a beautiful spring on the western declivity, the sunset side of the mountains, a position commanding a beautiful view of the extensive valley of the Del Norte, opening away to the southwest, while a towering mountain curve shut out the North. From the extreme northwest point of this mighty wall of Nature's masonry, the Del Norte comes glittering into view, like a silver thread, unraveling from the rugged wrap, twirled and tangled and knotted, it works out the labyrinth of its channel, and finally rolls like a noble river through the spreading valley, a line of Cotton-woods marking the route it has taken. Beneath us lay the end of our weary way—the mud-built city of Santa Fe, while away on to the west, through the azure enchantment of the distance, the cliffs of the dim Cordilleras fringe the horizon like fretted shadows. It was a splendid view worthy of the canvass, but who is thy servant "that he should do this great thing?"

"All baggage on this route is positively at the risk of the owners," and we tarried here to make our toilette and a little disposition of our surplus means of revenue, for which the law had a touching affection. Perfect Senecas in our way, we honored the law and would not allow it to stain the purity of its ermine by levying a duty of five hundred dollars upon each wagon load of goods irrespective of its value or amount, if—we could prevent it, especially

VIEW OF SANTA FE FROM THE EAST

as it was exclusively a "revenue tariff" for the sole use and benefit of his obesity, the Governor. Modestly waiting until night's curtains were snugly drawn around us, pack-mules heavily laden with domestic goods, powder, tobacco and other desirable articles, were soon dispatched to town under the conduct of a skilful financier and supercargo in such voyages.

The fourth trip cleared the camp of every article of merchandise, and the sub-treasury operations were completed, much to the credit of the revenue officers, who blundered upon one of the expeditions without being the wiser.

Flocks of sheep and goats passed us during the evening, on their way to the city, with their daily tribute of milk, and mutton. They are pastured in the miniature valleys among the crags of the mountain side, and are driven to the city by little tattered specimens of humanity, tenacious as ticks and thieving as monkeys. Whatever they can lift, they steal; no matter where it or its owner may be. Their impudence would throw a White Mountain Yankee into a fever of indignation and wonder. They display a decided *penchant* for revenue and will some day make good Government officers. Before day, we were awakened by the bleating of the joyful flocks on their return to the green pastures, and soon after, a Custom House officer honored us with a visit. After partaking of our breakfast, he seemed warmed with fraternal interest in our affairs, that was more marvelous than grateful, for having examined our loading, he informed us that he couldn't think of leaving such nice people, but would see us safely into town; in fact, that it was the very thing he came for, and that his presence would render our baggage perfectly safe. Just at this juncture in the Damon and Pythias affair, an old trapper plac-

ing a thumb upon the tip of his nasal promontory and executed so novel a gyration with the four fingers, and so very expressive withal, that the presence of offended dignity could not suppress a hearty laugh that must have greatly facilitated the kindly process of digestion. On our arrival in the suburbs of the city, the contents of jails and poor-houses seemed to have convened to welcome us, saying nothing of many well-conditioned mules and asses that had accompanied the other members of this great family.

The rabble rout followed us to the entrance of the Custom House, whither we were conducted in state by the revenue officers. A file of soldiers were drawn up in martial array each side the door, and having deposited our trunks upon the side-walk, we were requested to open them; the word *"Sesame"* never had an effect more magical. Great, portly looking boxes, flat, broad-bottomed depositories and well proportioned leathern trunks flew open at the word. The official leisurely turned over the hose, the linen and the unmentionables with his cane, evidently with the idea that it might be well to see the bottoms of the aforesaid trunks. The writer unfortunately had stowed about twenty cannisters of a combustible article known as *"Dupont's best,"* snugly away, and presently the suspicious row was disclosed, and for the first time since the days of Guy Fawkes, the "villainous saltpetre" was in danger

of going off without fire, but by a deal of awkward explanation in Spanish, and hints that we were California-bound, we were permitted to retain the powder. Trunk after trunk was overhauled, all passing muster but one, which turned out a number of aromatic little packages, containing pepper, spice, mace and other like condiments which the owner had provided for his own comfort during his sojourn in the wilderness. The hungry official tumbled them back again, closed the offending trunk with emphasis, labelled it "seventy dollars duty" and packed it off to the Custom House. The poor fellow thus victimized at the expense of his palate, would scarcely have paid the duty highly seasoned as it was, had not a coat of a hue most decidedly blue and a skirt most marvellously long, together with a nether garment of fashionable cut, been among the contents. But the thought of the Fandangos and these fascinating appendages to his outer man finally prevailed, and he was ere long walking the streets most disgracefully blue, "and what a length of tail behind!"

This little formality being over we inquired for the best hotel, as no runners or porters enumerated the names and merits of their respective establishments; sure indication that Santa Fe is semi-barbarian. Being informed that there was no such thing in town, our next business was to hire a room for twenty-five cents a week, deposit our baggage, pro-

vide for our mules, dine on the "European plan" and see the city. We subsequently learned that they were ready "to take us in," most egregiously. Santa Fe, the Capital of New Mexico is a city of seven thousand inhabitants, situated in the valley of the Del Norte, twenty-five miles from the river, at the west base of the eastern mountain chain. It is the great toll gate of the Mexican Republic, from the north the grand caravansary of the United States trade, which amounts to more than half a million annually. This superadded to the rich mine that first gave importance to this place, situated among the mountains twenty-eight miles to the south-west, yielding an annual revenue of $75,000, renders Santa Fe a place of "mark" in the western world. The mine is actually one of the richest in Mexico, and could American miners be protected from the attacks of lawless Indians would be vastly more valuable than it now is. It was free to any adventurer, the small tax of three per cent being levied for coining or stamping the bullion. The *modus operandi* of collecting and separating the glittering dust is simple and soon told. The gold exists in minute flakes sprinkled through the earth, as if some second Jupiter had come down in a golden shower in the New World. Leathern bags are filled with this earth and transported to a small stream three miles distant, where being deposited in boxes, it undergoes repeated washings till nothing but the gold and

clean sand remain. The former is then separated particle by particle, with the moistened pith of elder, secured in quills, and you have an article twenty-two carats fine, and worth sixteen dollars an ounce on the spot; an article for which the mass of humanity toil and struggle and die; an article that may alienate a brother though it cannot make a friend—and while it secures us from multiform want, contains in itself *all* want in one—a sort of *E pluribus unum* in the world of desires.

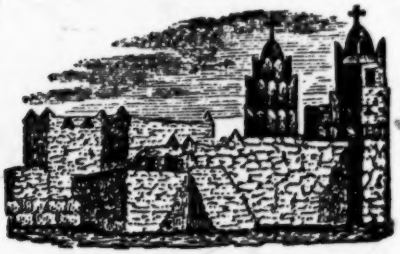
Santa Fe is the great rendezvous and market for the traders and the recruiting station for the trappers from the far Arkansas, who come thither laden with the rich tribute of the mountain streams, which borne across the plains, is finally sported in Broadway, or decorates the forms of beauty all over the world. An extensive trade is also carried on between this place and California, which however is attended with no little risk from the Indians who hover about the streams to plunder and destroy. Thus much for the natural advantages of Santa Fe, but for the artificial, we cannot say as much. Laid out into squares, its streets piously forming a double cross, its buildings constructed of earth, one story in height and flat roofed, giving the city the appearance of having sat down for a few moments, and that it will presently get up again, they have christened it "the City of the Holy Faith," a "faith" indeed, "most sweetly lost in sight."

Rude pillars support a white-washed portico along the streets, furnishing a delightful place under which to lounge or promenade giving an air of neatness to the whole street. The interior of the dwellings is usually divided into two apartments in front, the grand ante-chamber and presence room for strangers, while the closet-like rooms that transform the remainder of the house into a honeycomb, are privileged places, to which a foreigner must await a special invitation. Fine blankets sometimes carpet the earthern floors; no furniture meets the eye save matrasses and the appurtenances thereto, befitting emblems of the national character. A chimney about the dimension of the ancient clock "that ticked behind the door" is located in an angle of each apartment, while the fire-place is about the capacity of the latest "spring style" of hats. The public buildings, Custom House, Calaboose, Barracks and Governor's palace are not distinguished from more humble edifices, all being held together with equal tenacity by the adhesive power of mud. These occupy one side of the public square, while two brass cannon planted at either angle and about sixty ragamuffins pacing to and fro, *a la militaire,* lend a semi-barbarian, semi-martial appearance to the whole establishment. A small stream flowing in front of this array, at the distance of fifty feet, is a sort of Rubicon which a stranger cannot cross with impunity, and no second Caesar has ever attempted. A pedestal twenty

feet in height, in the centre of the square, surmounted with the Mexican coat of arms, a care-worn and dispirited looking eagle, and a snake apparently elated with the idea that he is up in the world, all done in solemn black, complete the picture of this scene of military and civic glory. The city is sprinkled with Catholic churches, two of which are spacious buildings that front the square, and lift the Holy Cross upon their lofty spires in perpetual sign.

One of these of which we give a representation in which atonement is made for the private and official sins of the Governor—and their name is legion—delights in a chime of seven bells, which are rung by means of ropes extending to the ground, and at least five times a day their services are required, and a special Mercury in these lower courts announces times and seasons to the ringer, or as Hood has it, "he went and told the Sexton and the Sexton tolled the bell." This church is destined to be immortal, for while all the world is growing old, time is at an absolute stand still with the Governor's cathedral. Some shrewd Yankee contracted to place between the towers thereof a suitable time-piece for $15,000. Whether the fellow *whittled* it out or *how* he did it, nobody knew, but in process of time, the clock made its appearance, at least the most elegant face of one. Having proceeded thus far, and received $6000, the fathers of the church militant repudiated the remaining $9000, whereupon the Yankee, by no

means disconcerted, packed up the balance, and was off with a return company to the tune "Sweet Home." Precisely twenty minutes past four was it by that clock ever after. Not the very first time in the history of the world, that men have been sadly taken in with a pretty face and *less* than six thousand.



Six of us having set up "Bachelor's Hall," at twenty-five cents rent per week, no expenses for housekeeping, a side of fat mutton for half a dollar, bread sixpence a loaf, strings of onions and sausages, pyramids of pies, and scripture measures of pears, apples and apricots, we lived grandly and conducted genteelly, for which latter fact, the public are respectfully referred to our landlady.

The quarters we had selected were on the east side of a coral or yard adjoining the square. The front was occupied by two traders as stores. The south contained a billiard table whither the Gover-

nor delighted to resort; opposite, was an extensive gambling establishment and adjoining the special apartments of the landlady, 'the mistress of all she surveyed' and her daughters. Five large dogs were co-tenants and guardians of the whole establishment. Mexican dogs like their masters are time-servers, and when the property of an American, make no scruples of exhibiting a good set of teeth to every Mexican that ventures to approach them. Whether this peculiar trait, so little in accordance with our general notions of the faithfulness and death-daring affection of the dog, is to be explained on the principle of "the ingratitude of Republics" or that these creatures are better qualified to appreciate Mexican character than their canine brethren, we are not prepared to determine. Thus were we situated, in the genteel part of the city, hands full of leisure and hearts full of fun, and were, as our good lady would have expressed it, had she known how, "Gentlemen about town." The "Garrison" band, consisting of three drummers, two fifers and a boy with a triangle, paraded through the city at noon and eight P. M., but as they had but one tune, this soon grew dull, and at last positively horrid—the creaking of a sign would have been a relief. In addition to this display of the military, guards were stationed around the city during the night, who drawled out once in fifteen minutes, the everlasting *"sentinela alerta,"* and one renegade who stubbornly stood like a sign post

just in front of our door, was sure to report the passing of every quarter, in a tone somewhat between a groan and a squeal.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

The Governor—Report of a Case not found in the books—Mexican character—Education—Mexican Women—A Picture.

THE Governor of all this glory receives six thousand dollars a year and perquisites *alias* stealings, from which he has the soldiers to pay, provision and equip, which latter however, judging from appearances, must be an inconsiderable bill. Strange to say, the present incumbent was, but a few years since, an unwieldy, unctuous citizen, but the *vox populi* was lifted Bashan-like in his behalf, and lo! a Governor, who fattening upon his fame and his fees, had become more ponderous than ever, and as unpopular as he was ponderous. His soldiers were uniformed in cloth round-abouts and unmentionables of buckskin; they are armed with short cutlasses and miserable little carbines, the most ferocious thing about them being their mustaches. It is certainly a wonder that the flower of Texan chivalry should have surrendered to a troop that Falstaff would have been ashamed of, and Don Quixote would have looked upon with contempt.

A tithe tax is levied to support this "pomp and circumstance" which considering that it is payable

in all sorts of commodities from bullion to beans is quite endurable. The fiat of the Alcalde is law in all civil suits, but in criminal cases the sanction of the President—Dictator—is requisite. Whether the decisions of his Excellenza smack of Blackstone or Cowan cannot be determined as unfortunately they have not been reported. One case however, has been saved from this wreck, and as it exhibits in a remarkable degree, the legal acumen and farsightedness of his honor, we venture to give it.

A woman brought and established an action for work and labor at the washboard, amounting to one dollar. The defendant set up a defence, that the garments were in a worse plight after the hydropathic treatment than before, and contended that a small balance was due him on account of it. The Alcalde after hearing the evidence and the arguments, and making himself thoroughly acquainted with the momentous question, decided, with all gravity, as an Alcalde should, that whereas the garments in question had been much worn since they were washed, and therefore no positive proof could be produced as to the manner in which the plaintiff had performed the work, *she, the said plaintiff should wash them again,* and that in case the work should then be performed to the satisfaction of the defendant, judgment should be rendered in her favor, and the *washee* should pay the costs of suit. It may be a matter of interest to briefless lawyers this side the moun-

tains, to learn that there is but one legal gentleman in all Santa Fe, and in important cases like the one above cited, he can be but on one side of the question. In petty suits, he is usually retained by both parties ,which is distracting to a degree.

Thus much for the Executive and Judiciary of Santa Fe. Now for the million, "the great Unwashed" as Carlyle would call them, not without a *shade* or two of truth. If to be indolent is a virtue, and to be ignorant is bliss, then are the natives of New Mexico, the happiest and most virtuous people on the globe. If religion consists in rendering homage to a God of gold, they are the most devout nation in Christendom. The mineral of the country accumulated in the hands of the few, is the grand lever that moves society and controls public opinion. A doubloon is an argument; as you increase the number, you perfect the logic until the reasoning is absolutely unanswerable. They are a hospitable people, for the highest dignitary in the Government will receive the bearer of a bribe with open arms, and frank to a fault, he makes no secret of the bribery. Gold with them is a true magician; it sharpens the steel, nerves the arm and quickens the vision; it deadens the ear to the plea of innocence and freezes the tear of virtue at its foundation; it purchases at the maternal hand the daughter's infamy and paves the way to Heaven. The stiletto of the assassin reddens like a dawn for gold, and the altars of the

sanctuary glitter with gifts for the peace of the victim. Education with them is eminently practical and consists of three lessons, pilfering, stealing and robbing. Gambling is an accomplishment earnestly sought after, being equivalent to three months at a boarding school in more Christian countries.

The most fashionable of these accomplishments is a banking game with cards called *Monte,* in which both sexes participate. It is not unusual to see sums from one hundred to a thousand dollars staked upon the turn of a single card. American traders too frequently become skilled in this financial operation, and devote themselves to it with professional zeal and an ability, worthy of a better cause. Many a trader has turned away from the fascination of the gambling table, only because he had rendered himself a beggar, to retrace with unavailing regret, the long way back to the home, whose fair fame and name he had thus stained and disgraced. More however, pass a lingering existence in a far land, aliens and strangers, sinking deeper and deeper in degradation and misery, till unfit for their home beyond the mountains, every tie that bound them to virtue and the past sundered, the very name their mother called them by but half remembered, they lie down upon the thorny pillow their own hands have woven, the burial places of the years that are gone, all open behind them, and not a ray or a smile to paint a bow upon the clouds of the Future.

The hero of the sketch we have attempted to give, the Mexican himself, is slender, symmetrical, with a hungry Cassius-like look and sports a mustache. Moccasins, buck-skin pantaloons open at the sides to the knee, a cloth roundabout, sometimes a fine blanket and a broad brimmed hat surmounting the whole, complete the costume of the native Mexican. Like an Italian, he carries a stiletto in his sleeve but the Bowie knife and Arkansas tooth pick of the American have rendered the more poetic and slender blade, almost out of fashion. The Mexican female deserves a cabinet-picture in our poor collection. Could we summon to our command the ready hand and obedient pencil, we would paint you the picture of a Mexican woman, slight and almost faultless in form, with a "laughing devil" dancing in eyes of visible darkness, and playing the very Daguerreotype with the secrets of her heart—a profusion of dark hair a la Grecian, and secured at the temples with little combs of gold—cheeks ripened by sunlight softly shaded beneath. A dress of white mull covered with blue gauze—a foot like a fairy's cased in slippers of white kid peeping out beneath it, and a step—could we paint it—like a fawn's. We would throw a tri-colored scarf interwoven with silver and gold, tasseled and spangled and fringed, lightly over the head, or allow it to fall gracefully upon the shoulders. We would clasp the waist with a cord of gold tissue, and secure it tastefully at the

side; we would vary from fact and paint her undeformed by a—bustle. Bracelets upon her wrists and jewelry upon her fingers, a touch or two of sunlight to lend animation and intelligence to the countenance, in lieu of an intellect to illumine it, and you have the picture of a Mexican doll—the *lady* of Santa Fe. Change silk to worsted and white to check—strip it of spangles and tissue, put plated rings for gold and colored glass for real gems, but the same eye and hair and form, and the semblance of the girl that lights the "segareto" for the lady, is before you.

Who would dream that the lady so innocent upon canvass, is as frail as she is fair? But "pity 'tis, 'tis true." Her life is one incessant round of dalliance, dancing and devotion. Gracefully does she move through the figures of a cotillion, over that earthen floor, to the sweet notes of the guitar. Lightly does she whirl in the mazes of the dizzy waltz. This is her favorite dance, for turning heads is half her devotion and more than half of her life. How carelessly that scarf is disposed upon her shoulders. How charmingly she glances at the "Americanos." "Take care!" she's fooling thee—beware!" As she flits like a sylph from figure to figure so she flutters like a butterfly from heart to heart. That earthen floor is the arena of all her conquests—again we say, beware! See her now as she glides gracefully along the promenade, with all the dignity of conscious loveliness.

'Tis the *danseuse* of last night. She sees you—smiles —would speak—take care! There's no such thing as heart beating beneath that rainbow-tinted zone—no softer sigh than that for conquest ever heaves that gauze-veiled bosom. The target gone, poor Cupid breaks his bow and paints upon his empty quiver for armorial ensign the "almighty dollar."

Such is one phase of our common humanity. A worse can be found in the *salons* of affluence and the halls of the titled great—a better we trust, blesses the inmates of homes far humbler than those of the *elite* of Santa Fe.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH

HAVING redeemed our pledge, and conducted the patient reader safely over the prairies, across the desert and through the mountains to Santa Fe, but little now remains to complete our little sketch. True a volume might be written upon Santa Fe as it was, and the city of the Holy Faith as it is, but we await the time when the distant mountains shall be bound to us by the iron bonds of the railway, and be woven into our very being by the nerves of the Telegraph. When the Anglo Saxon race shall throng the streets of that mart beyond the mountains, and the neat and airy dwelling shall take the place of the mud-walled and gloomy court of the old Castilian; then perhaps he who can tell them of the time when he lighted his fire on the brink of the boiling springs, and breakfasted *tete-a-tete* with the swarthy Mexican or the grim Utaw will be heard with interest, perhaps with incredulity. Here, where the green pastures are spread abroad to the day, and the wild stream is taught to turn the dizzy wheel, the hardy hunter chased the Blacktailed Deer, or formed the sentried carol. There, where now the plains are sprinkled with the abodes of plenty and peace, and checkered with the parti-colored hues of

the harvest, starving men have sought the timid game in vain and caravans have languished.

Then a little cottage may peep through the shrubbery of the mountain gorge, and the fingers of Saxon daughters train the creeping tendrils over the humble roof. Will its inmates believe that the hunters of the Santa Fe trail burned the Comanche camp upon that very spot, and the wild whoop of battle rang quivering through the gorge? The husky sweep of the cradle will pass with measured strokes over the Prairie, and children will swell the song of the harvest home. Will they believe that countless herds of Buffalo have poured in the thunder of the stampedo over those mighty clearings? That the mustangs have tramped in the pride of conscious liberty and strength over plains furrowed with the plough and gilded with the harvest? Then highways will intersect like a network the space this side the mountains—canals will wind their silvery way from village to village. But will they believe that the day once was, when a solitary trail and an armed and solitary caravan alone connected Independence, an outpost, with Santa Fe, the portal of New Mexico? Let then, the story of Santa Fe be reserved, till time shall lend to the reality of truth, the witching charm of fiction—when the historian shall be forgotten in the novelist, and the familiar details of the present, shall become the marvel of the future.

We remarked that the pledge had been redeemed,

but a retrospect of that wild and winding way and the thousand incidents of pleasure and of peril that were crowded within so brief a space, following each other like the scenes of a diorama, and impressing themselves upon the memory in a type so clear and full, that neither time nor distance can obliterate them, would induce us to retract the statement, were it not that experience alone can qualify the critic, and the record would be forgotten by him in the remembrance of what we have omitted. Our sojourn in Prairiedom, opened to our vision a new page in the book of life—it quickened the dull pulses that had hitherto kept time to the monotonous routine of business—we beheld men stripped of the disguises of civilized life, and freed from the restraints, as they were without the protection of the social state. We saw shrewdness quickened almost to prescience, courage developed by danger and endurance perfected by suffering. We watched human character visibly and magically developing, as men breathed the free air that swept from the dim and distant mountains; we saw them as day by day qualities were brought to light of which they had hitherto been unconscious possessors. The scene was strange, wonderful and instructive. But there were some in our band that changed not—the hunters and traders who had clambered the mountain heights, explored their fastnesses, traced the streams to their springs, encountered the Indian in his native haunt and

passed years upon the Santa Fe trail. Exposure had bronzed their features but it had struck not to their hearts. Exercise had stiffened their sinews, but it had not contracted their hands to the miser's grip—experience had rendered them watchful but it could not make them treacherous. No, among those rude step-sons of the wilderness are as noble souls as ever sought lodgment in a dwelling of clay. For the thousandth time truth proves lovelier than fiction and the "Leather-stocking" of Cooper may be found upon the trail or the mountain.

We beheld the curse of gold exemplified in a nation's character, as history had recorded and biography had sketched it. In that glittering but lifeless vein, streaking the mountain side like a ray of sunlight, the energy and the honor of a people lie motionless. There is no soul, no heart, no vitality there. The talents of the mine and not of the man are developed; society is paralyzed; "the form erect" bent over the coveted dust, can no longer look heavenward, and passion, avarice and indolence deform the fair proportions of the last and crowning work of creative energy.

But of all the scenes of interest and beauty which met our eyes, none made a deeper impression upon the seeing heart than the ruins of the mountain city of the Pecos. It was not that the wrecks of architectural beauty were strewn around—to the rude stone columns and broken walls of earth, the sculp-

tor would lay no claim. It was not that the spot had been made classic by the Muse's touch, for its bards had exchanged the harp for the lance and fallen with the temples they could not defend. But to behold the ruins of an old world lying in the very wilds of the new, beneath the shadowy pall and the eloquent silence of her mountains—to see the feeble remnant of a mighty race, stealing noiselessly amid the heaped up monuments of the past, as if fearful to break the repose of Desolation—to feel that the rubbish of to-day was the hope and the glory of yesterday—that the dust of her courts was once warm and tinted with life—pressed by the lips of beauty, and loved to the fullest capacity of the human heart—this was a lesson that we had never before read for ourself, written in language that needed not the lore of cloisters to interpret. True it was long, long ago, but who

> **"Would smile at woes, because some years**
> **Have swept between them and his tears?"**

Amid the twilight of that old cathedral, the vestal fire was burning—a flame, "so the fathers said," lit by the last of a mighty line—the princely Montezumas, three hundred years before. The traditionary charge of their great chief, "let this burn on till I return," had been obeyed! A lofty and devoted faith was that— a faith that would have graced the Christian church in purer times, and let a glory to the martyr's fire.

Lone mart of the mountain! Time smote not thy walls,
But fanned them to dust with the wave of his wing;
The wolf in thy temple discordantly calls,
And the wind-wavered weeds to thy architraves cling.

Thy dead are not with thee—none tenant the tomb—
The storms of three ages have swept them away;
But their memory still like a censer's perfume,
Burned bright on that altar, and burns there to-day.

The hearts that had loved it went solemn and old,
The breath that had fanned it grew feeble and chill,
The hands that had fed it were palsied and cold,
But the flame of the chancel was lingering still!

Their vigils were ended—they wearied and slept,
And murmured in dreams, "the light! guard it well!"
The weepers that watched it, reposed with the wept—
The light curved a hope in the tears as they fell!

The rush of three ages just flickered the flame,
The red breath of war only crimsoned its light,
The power that extinguished a nation and name,
Reached not to the star on that altar of night.

That vestal is burning, an emblem sublime,
Of a heart full of hope and a soul full of trust,
That trims its own ray in the twilight of time,
And peacefully waits for the "dust unto dust!"

If the Santa Fe Trail is a place in which to test character, it is also a place in which to try friends. The little alliances formed in such a trip, often ripen to friendships that are broken only with the loosening of Life's "silver cord." It may seem to one who has never passed a night unsheltered by the roof-tree of home, or wandered beyond the precincts of civilization, that a march across the plains must

be a wild way to make friends. But such persons have yet to learn that it is the brotherhood of suffering, the community of peril that weaves strong bonds—stronger far than the ties netted by the fingers of delicate ease in the mansions of affluence. Bright skies will make friends of a world, but cloudy days make all the world of friends. He who is true to you during the journey to Santa Fe, will not desert you in the journey of life. It will not be strange then, if at this distance of time, we revert to the companions of the mess, the partners of the hunt and the comrades in hours of danger, with commingled feelings of pleasure and regret—pleasure, that we can number some of them among friends, whom a world's wanderings could not alienate—regret, that in the arrangement of earthly things, the partings exceed the meetings by one—that we shall never look again upon the heartful, honest face of many a hardy hunter, the truthful imprint of a noble nature, which the storms of thirty years had failed to efface. Some of them may be wandering among the mountains or along the streams of the far north-west. Some may be stretched upon the couch of languishing, or withering in the clutches of Want, or sleeping the sleep that knows no waking. Others again may have wearied of the way, and returned to their homes, to wander no more. Here's a health to the friends of the Santa Fe Trail!

If healthful excitement and vigorous exercise and

a constant succession of wild and stirring incident, and sublime and beautiful scenery are to be estimated in projecting a tour of pleasure, take the trip to Santa Fe. If one would know how sweet is the scanty meal to him that toils for it, let him sit down by the camp fire in the broad prairie, after a weary march and a fruitless hunt, and wrapping "the drapery of his couch about him lie down to pleasant dreams" of smoking viands and laden boards. Would he know the luxury of the wilderness? Then must he sit by some clear, gurgling stream, and turn a slice of the juicy "hump" on a fork of his own manufacture by a fire of his own kindling. Would he know the value of that sparkling blessing, water? —Let him traverse the sixty miles of arid waste with an empty canteen, and he will learn how, unconsciously he had been the recipient of a wonderful blessing as "the ironbound bucket that hung in the well" swung up its cool and trickling treasure to his expectant lips. Is he oppressed with *ennui* or does Dyspepsy, that "old man of the sea" make him sigh that the burden of Sinbad could not be his instead? Let him clamber the mountains, linger at the mighty portals that let a new world through to the Pacific shore—let him wander amid the ruins of the lone city of the Pecos—chase the Buffalo upon their native plains, lasso a steed like Mazeppa's, hearken to the thunder of a stampedo—take the key note of a Camanche bullet, catch his breakfast in a mountain

stream, dig his dinner from a burrow, subdue the stubbornness of his mule, and participate in a Fandango at Santa Fe. Would he know more of himself, his own capabilities and perchance his own weaknesses? Let him bivouac with traders and messmate with hunters, hear the homely truths that circulate around the camp-kettle like old wine around the festal board, and our word for it, like the waters of the Pierian spring, "drinking largely will sober him again." He will learn that dignity may comport as well with a buckskin hunting shirt as with costly array and fine linen; that wit may sparkle as brightly from the lips of him who traps the fur as of him who wears it; and that eloquence may blaze as brightly beneath a canopy of western stars as amid the light of chandeliers, and the approving smiles of beauty. Does he weary of home? Let him form one of a caravan—leave Independence and the prairies and the mountains behind him—sit down in his unfinished apartment in Santa Fe, and count the miles that stretch away between him and the cradle that rocked him, and the time that must pass and the dangers he must encounter, ere he shall again set foot upon the green sward he pressed in childhood—let him book the calculation in his heart, and then ,mingle as he may, in the gay scenes of a strange land, truant as he may have proved to the skies that bent lovingly over the years of infancy and innocence, his thoughts will turn, true as needle

to the North, to the land toward the rising sun, and
ere he has time for thought, he will find himself
like the writer, looking back upon his wanderings
and humming with his lips, while his heart keeps
time.